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[VOL. I.

BIOGRAPHY.

Memoir of the late Rev. Samuel Lavington, of Bideford, Devon.

(Continued from page 64.)

MR. LAVINGTON'S education, improved by incessant study, qualified him for appearing to the world as an *author*, as well as a preacher: but his modesty and diffidence made him stumble at the very threshold of literary fame. Besides an address, which the associated ministers of the west, directed annually to the churches under their care, he published a thanksgiving sermon, wherein appeared a curious blunder which had escaped his eye. This seems to have fixed his resolution not to appear again in print:—a resolution which we know not whether to congratulate, or bewail. Probably he became the greater *preacher* for thus hastily laying aside the character of an author. Not that we mean to say these characters are incompatible with each other, but that eminence in each is rarely attained by the same person.

Mr. Lavington's diligence in study, however, warrants us in believing, that had his miscellaneous manuscripts been now in existence, many interesting things might have been collected from them. But it is much to be regretted, that one day, when his family were from home, he took the opportunity of looking over his papers, and committed most of them to the flames. Among the rest were many copies of letters which he had written to

friends, and from which we should be glad to have given a selection in this too scanty memoir. His sermons he spared. Knowing that many of them had been transcribed by friends, and that probably some more public use might be made of them after his death, as they had been so widely circulated in private, he saw the propriety of preserving the originals. Indeed, he had already, for the use of his family, indulged them by transcribing as many as filled ten or twelve volumes.

The burning of some people's manuscripts would be as little to be regretted, as the conflagration of those curious books at Ephesus, of which we read in the apostolical history. But when men, eminent for wisdom and piety, destroy their papers before their decease, they know not what injury they do to posterity. The plea commonly urged in justification of this practice,—more frequent among men of the most eminent worth, than those of an inferior stamp,—is, that their papers are too unfinished for publication, or too private to be laid before the world. As to the first part of this plea, we would refer to Pascal's thoughts, which were left by him in the most desultory and unfinished state, and therefore, on this plea, might have been with propriety committed to the flames. Yet they found judicious editor; and who imagines them to be any dishonour to his memory;—who has not

derived some material benefit from perusing them? And as to the privacy of papers, it is lamentable indeed, if an eminent man has no friend blessed with discernment enough to suppress what is clearly improper for the public eye. However, to put the matter beyond doubt, such *very private* papers we would consent should be destroyed by their author: but we must be permitted to plead the cause, not of idle prurient curiosity, but of literature, piety, and general improvement, which unquestionably would be all aided by proper selections from the posthumous manuscripts of men eminent in their generation. What we write, *ought* to be worthy of preservation; and in the case before us, generally is. It is to be wished that Mr. Lavington had taken this view of the subject.

But we leave Mr. Lavington as an author, to contemplate him as a minister. This character he well sustained; overlooking the flock with care, feeding it in green pastures, and watching for its continual increase.

Pastoral visiting, with him, was a different thing from that which commonly goes under the same name. His visits were not propitiatory and servile, nor were they formal, and merely official. His people knew his character too well to wish to engage his valuable time in useless and trifling conversation. Monday was his visiting day. His flock knew for what purpose he came, and he expected that they would forthwith come to the point. His visits were short, though regular. He was a spiritual physician among his people. Patiently and attentively he heard their statements, and at the time said little in reply. When he went home, however, he prepared the most suitable medicine for the various cases which had come before him, and on the first day of the week, dis-

tributed them to the relief, the joy, and the surprise, of his spiritual patients. No one coveted to gain the minister's ear, and thereby to obtain an ascendancy over his brethren, or exult in his own distinction; or dictate to his instructor. Mr. Lavington happily blended so much dignity with affability, that every member was kept in his proper place, and all thereby shared the more equal benefit.

Another beautiful feature in Mr. Lavington's character as a minister, was zeal. We shall do more justice to this feature by quoting again from Mr. Rooker's animated sketch, than by our own delineation. "You can bear witness, my brethren, to his anxious desire for the salvation of men, and for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ. His zeal was a steady light, which for a very long period animated his public and private exertions. The young people of this society, will, I am persuaded, never forget—and oh, may they remember it to their eternal advantage!—what solicitude he discovered in his annual addresses to them, for their spiritual welfare, and what deep regret he expressed, that so few *made haste and delayed not to keep God's commandments*. Can any saint or sinner, who attended on his ministry, say; *No man ever cared for my soul?*—Or will any one assert that our late venerable friend pursued his own interest or glory, while those of his blessed Master were neglected. But his zeal was not confined within the limits of his own society, or to persons of his own denomination. He rejoiced in the prosperity of religion among its various professors, by whatever inferior name they were distinguished. You know how often in his public discourses, he alluded with pleasure to the extension of the gospel in foreign countries, which has of

late been so widely attempted;—how he rejoiced that he had lived to see the day when such exertions are made. That dread of innovation, and that cautious and chilling spirit which frequently makes old persons, however venerable for their piety, undervalue the zealous efforts of their brethren, to which they have not been accustomed, appear not to have influenced the heart of your late aged minister. He discovered an interest in all exertions for the propagation of the gospel, and a heart-felt satisfaction when he heard of their success. He was a man of a truly catholic spirit. A dissenter on principle, and, descended in a line of pious ancestors from those who had seceded from the established church, and from one of the ejected ministers in particular, he might be called, like Paul, a *Hebrew of the Hebrews*: yet you know how sincerely he loved, and how respectfully he treated, the disciples of Christ, to whatever party they belonged. He avoided, indeed, the pitiful inconsistency of those, who, professing an evangelical creed, are induced, either from a tameness of spirit, or from a desire of being distinguished as liberal men, to act as if their religious principles were altogether unimportant: but, while he held fast the form of sound words, which he had received, and the influence of which he had experienced, he never spoke of others with a cruel harshness or unbecoming severity. Nothing can more evidently prove how much his conduct was governed by the law of kindness, than this fact, well known to all his acquaintance, that he was loved and revered by persons of all denominations, with the regard which is due to an affectionate father. His zeal was thus free from bigotry, and tempered with moderation.”

It now remains to give some

sketch of our friend's public ministrations. In his prayers there was much to approve. They had the correctness of a precomposed form, without its sameness and formality. Without being drawn out to a wearisome length,—for in all services connected with religion, our friend, upon principle, avoided tediousness,—his devotions in the sanctuary were full, scriptural, and pertinent: and, while they were fervent, yet far removed from all coarseness, and storming, and indecent volubility. They were truly humble and reverential.

At the Lord's Supper he was peculiarly solemn, yet highly animated. “In this service,” says his friend Mr. Evans, “he not only excelled most of his brethren, but surpassed even himself.”

He greatly excelled in delivering charges at the ordination of ministers, and hence he was often engaged in this service: every minister was desirous of being honoured with his presence, and receiving his matured advice, when he entered upon the sacred office. Its importance, its duties, its difficulties, its dangers, its encouragements, its rewards, its triumphs, were all delineated with a masterly hand. Indeed, all extraordinary occasions he had a most happy talent for improving; the seasons, death, shipwrecks, &c. always received notice from him: he thought it of importance to seize every opportunity which such occurrences afforded for pressing on the attention of his hearers, the solemn truths too generally neglected. With this view,—not certainly with the ecclesiastical idea of the peculiar sacredness of these days above others, but taking advantage of the actual state of mind in his less enlightened hearers,—he preached appropriate sermons on Christmas day, Easter, and Whitsunday, &c. The discourses of Mr. Laving-

ton possessed a remarkable, and almost singular character. They are, indeed, considered as bearing a striking resemblance to those of the celebrated Dr. Grosvenor. This may readily be admitted, when we know, that while Mr. Lavington was prosecuting his studies in London, he frequently attended the Doctor's ministry, and was particularly attached to him as a preacher. Yet it will be confessed, he was no servile imitator, if he has not much surpassed his model. His thoughts and manner were animated, without approaching to levity. He aimed not to bespangle his sermons with points of wit, and other puerile ornaments, for the purpose of attracting regard. But he conveyed his sentiments in so lively and engaging a method, that he possessed an art almost peculiar to himself of fixing the attention of the most careless and dissipated hearer. A very gay young man who occasionally heard him, once said; "I will honestly confess, I am always weary before other ministers have half done; but Mr. Lavington never tires me." His descriptions of character were often drawn with a masterly hand, equally indicating his superior genius, and his close observation of human nature. He divided and distributed his subjects with precision and neatness; carefully avoiding on the one hand the prolixity and obscurity of our old divines, and, on the other, the more offensive quaintness of some of the moderns. He expressed his thoughts in language so proper and perspicuous, that he was understood and approved both by the learned and the ignorant. He was particularly happy in his scriptural allusions; and his quotations, instead of being awkwardly introduced to eke out a sentence, were so apposite, that they resembled the stones of Solomon's temple, all hewn and squared, and

exactly fitted for the respective parts of the building. From his youth he had been taught to wield the sword of the spirit. When he first appeared in public, an old minister addressed him after preaching, on the frequent use he made of scripture, observing, "If you go on so, young gentleman, you will soon get through the Bible, and what will you do then?" "I will begin again," replied the young divine.

In the *introduction* of his sermon, he was often peculiarly striking. He aimed at being so; assigning it as his opinion, that if the attention were obtained at first, there was little danger of its being afterwards diverted. No feature in his discourse was more conspicuous, than his ease and familiarity of expression, without any thing grovelling, negligent, or inconsistent with the solemnity of the pulpit. His sermons were not mere essays, but close addresses to the conscience, the understanding, and the best feelings of his hearers; a kind of "dignified conversation;" a flowing, manly, and pathetical eloquence, which showed that he was earnest in the cause that he pleaded. Clearly and fully he exhibited the boundless grace of Christ, as the only cause of our salvation, while he displayed every truth and duty in connexion with this subject. He endeavoured to convince and humble the sinner, and to deprive him of every hope but that which the gospel reveals. Though to *prophesy smooth things* would have been more congenial with his mild and gentle disposition, yet he failed not, with all the faithfulness of a man of God, with all the zeal of a Boanerges, to awaken and alarm the guilty and secure. In all his discourses, he was solicitous to promote the vital piety, the beautiful consistency, the usefulness, and the

happiness, of the christian character.

In order to give the reader some idea of Mr. Lavington's manner in the pulpit, we cannot do better, than quote a passage from the Rev. Mr. Cobbin's interesting work,—“The French Preacher,” introduction, page xli. note. “The late Rev. Samuel Lavington always read his sermons; and, in later life, with a glass; yet no preacher was ever more useful, nor did any preacher more powerfully fix the attention of his auditory. This was the more singular, as he cultivated none of the alluring charms of oratory. He had a fine figure, but it always remained immovable; a commanding countenance, but he never gave it expression; a deep voice, but he never varied its tones. The composition of his sermons was perfectly simple, the matter contained neither profound ratiocination, nor the soaring flights of fancy. In short, he had not any of the adventitious aids of the orator, and yet no orator ever excelled him in the effect of his discourses: nor was that effect produced by a false humility, a feigned affection, or the audacities of Antinomianism. He always supported the authority of a teacher, observed the strictest propriety in the choice of epithets, and generally dwelt on practical and experimental theology. The secret of his success may perhaps be attributed, under the divine blessing, to the originality of his thoughts, to the simplicity of his illustrations, to the solemnity of his manner, and to the holiness of his life. He had always something new; his hearers always understood him; he always preached, as a dying man to dying men; and his life was known every where to shed a lustre upon his ministry. He was uni-

formly the same man: he *feared God always.*”

In the fine arts, we hear of *painting for effect*: in a nobler, purer sense, we may use the same phrase of the preacher;—he *preaches for effect*: and *this* effect was, on some occasions, very strongly produced in Mr. Lavington's hearers. At an ordination at South Molton, after conducting, in his discourse, the faithful laborious minister from stage to stage, he introduced him into the celestial city. The description of his reception by his glorified Saviour, was in such glowing melting strains, that the late excellent Mr. Reader, of Taunton, who was present, said, it had nearly unmanned him, that his animal powers could hardly bear it, and that if Mr. Lavington had continued much longer, he should have been obliged to leave the place.

On another occasion, also, *this effect* was very remarkable: we quote again from Mr. Cobbin: “it was at the ordination of the Rev. Mr. Seaward of Barnstable. The discourse which Mr. Lavington then delivered, is printed in the first volume of his sermons, and was thus introduced by the preacher. ‘What a multitude is here assembled to see an ordination! Many of you were, perhaps, never present at such a solemnity before; and I should be very sorry, if, when the assembly breaks up, you should go away with visible disappointment, and say, *Is that all?* Why, What came ye out for to see? Did you expect to see a number of apostles met together to lay their hands upon the head of a young minister, and communicate to him some miraculous powers? Alas! we have them not ourselves. If we had, you should not take all this trouble for nothing. If we had, you should have something by which

to remember an ordination as long as you live. If the Holy Ghost were at our command, most gladly would we lay our hands upon you all, and this assembly should be like that mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles:—*While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word.* But, what we cannot command, we may humbly and earnestly supplicate. Shall I then beg the favour of you, to join with me in this short ejaculation to the God of all grace! O God, the Lord, to whom belong the issues from death, pour out thy spirit upon all in this assembly, and command on every one of us, a blessing out of Zion, even life for evermore! Amen!—The congregation, abstracted for the moment from all other objects, forgot the order of worship; rose from their seats, joined in the collect, and then resumed their places with the greatest solemnity. The finest extemporary addresses of a Massillon, or a Bossuet, never in effect rivalled this *written* discourse of Lavington's. Every

planet must be allowed to move in its own orbit."

To sum up our friend's character on those points most worthy of imitation, it may be said: As a *Christian*, he was steadfast, and unblameable, meek and humble, kind and hospitable, a lover of peace and order, and a *lover of good men*. As a *minister of Christ*, he was diligent, zealous, condescending, and faithful. Or, in the words of his venerable and estimable friend and relative, the Rev. Mr. Evans; "In the pulpit, he was an eminently distinguished preacher; in the desk, a condescending and judicious catechist; in his own house, an affectionate husband, an indulgent parent, a generous brother, and a kind master; and, in the houses of others, the faithful monitor, the skilful counsellor, and the sympathizing friend." Every one desirous of the church's prosperity, will join us in praying, that God would be pleased to raise up many *Lavingtons* among us, and continue them in uninterrupted succession, to the end of time!

SHORT DISCOURSES FOR FAMILIES, &c.

No. III.

CHRISTIANS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

Ye are the light of the world.
Matt. v. 14.

THE endowments of divine grace, no less than those of nature, are intended, not only for the advantage of those on whom they are bestowed, but for the benefit of others, through their instrumentality. He who lights up his sun in the heavens, for the use and comfort of the myriads on whom he pours his rays, bestows the influence of his spirit on the hearts of his people, to bring them to a

knowledge of the gospel, and to renovate their moral character, with the same benevolent end in view as it respects others by whom they are surrounded. The language of our Lord in the text, though it applied particularly to the disciples, to whom it was immediately addressed, since it became their office to chase away, by the light of the gospel which they received, the darkness from the nations, is applicable also in a measure to all who are invested with privileges, and who are brought to sustain a character similar to theirs, in every following age. In the most important and

the most elevated sense, they are required to be the "light of the world."

By this noble and beautiful metaphor, our Lord instructs us in the following particulars, with reference to the character of his disciples.

I. It reminds us of the illumination, which they themselves have received. The light which they are called to exhibit, is not original, but derived—not a natural, but a spiritual communication. If now they are "light in the Lord," it must not be forgotten, that once they were darkness. By nature there was no difference between them and others, for all are equally involved in the sad effects of the first apostasy. With the gospel before their eyes, they were once ignorant of its meaning, and indifferent to its representations: "having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that was in them, because of the blindness of their heart." The difference that is now to be perceived in them, is owing to an influence, which came upon them, either more suddenly, like the light that flashed upon the bosom of the dark abyss, or more gradually, like the beams of the morning sun, which extend themselves imperceptibly through the hemisphere. In either case, they consider an astonishing and important change to have passed upon them, and one of which the gift of sight to a man born blind, would be but a faint illustration. This change they all agree in ascribing, to the efficacy of a divine agency, exclaiming, with the Apostle, "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." How many who read these lines, may have cause to

make this acknowledgment! Let none of them reckon lightly of the fact. Let them not, by comparing themselves with others, who have attained the heights of christian knowledge and experience, undervalue what has been done for them, but let them think of the numbers around them, who still remain destitute of any spiritual apprehension of Christ, and betray, by the whole of their conduct, a fatal indifference towards him: let them advert to their own former state of comparative ignorance, folly, and danger, and adore the hand that has brought them out of darkness into marvellous light.

II. This metaphor impresses us with the importance of exhibiting the principles of Christianity in our behaviour and conversation. The conduct of a converted man rises far beyond the level of that which can be produced by any human principles or systems. The influence of the gospel over his mind, not only softens down the asperities of his nature, not only heightens the charm and improves the character of his more amiable qualities, but imparts a variety of other dispositions and graces, which, though they may excite the surprise of some, and provoke the contempt of others, are not unworthy the esteem of an angel. It may reasonably be supposed, that such a character is not formed by the divine hand, with a view to its concealment. It is a light which the breath of heaven has kindled for the purpose of its being seen. Hence the exhortation, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

The lives of the saints exhibit virtue—not barren and dry, but animated and sprightly, and arrayed in all her charms. In their example, we see the perfect max-

ims of the gospel reduced to practice, and the most heroic virtue made the object of our senses: it not only shows us the true path, but conducts us by the hand, and sweetly invites us to walk therein. Man is naturally an imitative creature, and much more easily wrought upon by what he sees, than by what he hears. A holy life impresses the conviction of the excellence of Christianity upon those, who would not be accessible by argument: it is a sermon, which explains and enforces every other, without needing for itself any explanation. Few have been able to resist the efficacy of example combined with instruction: it has frequently melted away that stubbornness which was proof against every other attraction. Let us not then be contented with the negative praise of bringing no disgrace upon the gospel by our tempers or conduct, though it would be well, if all in the church of Christ could lay claim to this portion of commendation: but let us remember that we are exhorted by the Apostle, though in the humblest and most unfavourable situations of life, to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

III. We learn from the metaphor of the text, the ardent and active benevolence that ought to result from the possession of christian principles. In how many ways is the light of the sun beneficial? Breaking forth in the morning, it discovers to the traveller the perils of his situation, and the path that extricates from them. It rouses from torpor and sloth, into new life and vigour. It warms and cheers, and enlivens those upon whom it shines, so that he who ascribed vanity to every thing else, was compelled to acknowledge, "Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is to behold the sun." In these several ways, Christians

are called to be beneficial to others. They should be the guide of those, who sit in darkness;—the instructors of the ignorant, and those who are out of the way. They should endeavour to quicken others by the use of that word, which has been the power of God to their salvation. They should enliven the house of mourning with those consolations which they have to impart, remembering, that the only professed definition of religion in the Scriptures, is that which makes it to consist in visiting "the fatherless and the widow in their affliction." In short, they should never forget that they are the followers of him, who went about doing good, and who has left them an example, that they should follow his steps. Nothing can equal the benevolence of him, who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to lay down his life a ransom for many. His heart was a fountain of mercy, and it streamed forth in all his actions. How is it possible then for a man to delude himself, by supposing that he has received a portion of his spirit, and may hope for his approbation at the last day, who has no more benevolence of feeling and character, than what he possessed by nature, or than what he perceives to be evinced by unregenerate and worldly men!

It is worthy of remark, that the followers of our Lord, who will be particularly noticed by him at the last day, are not those whose gifts have excited admiration, whose powers of mind have been consecrated to the attainment of religious knowledge, or whose zeal has stimulated them to a vigorous defence of important doctrines; but those whose benevolence has prompted them to abound in the kindest offices of humanity. "I was an hungered," he will say, "and ye gave me meat; naked, and ye clothed me; sick, and ye visited

me; in prison, and ye came unto me. Forasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Enter ye into the joy of your Lord." And if among the benevolent themselves, there are those who will be raised to peculiar honour, it will surely be such, as, in addition to their concern for the perishing bodies of men, have employed their patient and persevering, and well directed efforts for the recovery of their immortal minds from the wretchedness of ignorance and sin. If, as is certainly the case, there are no emotions so blissful as those which arise from a contemplation, in favourable circumstances, of happiness to which we have been subservient, what will be the emotions of the Christian, when, at the great day, he shall find himself in the presence, not only of the Saviour whom he had loved, and the friends whom he had lost, but of those whose feet he had been instrumental in turning into that path, which has conducted them, it may be, from the very borders of perdition, to the abodes of bliss!

IV. But the metaphor employed by our Lord in the passage before us, particularly reminds us of the *extent* of christian philanthropy. The field he proposes to his disciples for their benevolent labours, is none other than the world. Ye are the light, not of a city, not of a country merely, but of the world!

We may gather from this the expansive nature of that love and good will to men, which the gospel, wherever it is properly received, produces in the heart. The wishes of a Christian for the welfare of his fellow creatures, are bounded by no limits but those of the globe. He sighs over the condition of the poor heathen, and will not be backward, according to his ability, to aid the various societies that

CONG. MAG. NO. 3.

are formed for the purpose of communicating unto them the light of life. We do not say but his benevolence should have respect in the first place, to those by whom he is immediately surrounded, but it will not, it ought not to be confined to these. It is a stone that will be cast again and again into the expanse of waters, until the undulations extend to the most distant shores. In what school then can they have learned Christianity, whose hearts expand with no warm emotions for the welfare of the *human race*, and whose death would deprive no institution which has for its object the spiritual good of distant nations, of a member, or a benefactor? What view can they have taken of that prospect which even in its outline filled the hearts of prophets with joys too big for utterance? Why should their stay be courted in a world, so large a portion of which is cut off from their affection, and debarred the hope of receiving any benefit from them? Or how can they venture to place themselves among the number of those who are specified in this description, "Ye are the light of the world?"

The purposes of God respecting the conversion of mankind at large, it must ever be remembered, are to be carried into execution by human instrumentality; not because he has need of it, but because of his gracious determination to employ it for the improvement and honour of those who are called to its exercise. Ourselves have succeeded, in the course of time, to the work which Apostles and Christians of all preceding generations have left unfinished,—that of diffusing the light of truth and salvation into every corner of the earth. We are unworthy of the name we assume, and the men whom we follow, if we neglect to take a part in this work. Chris-

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tions of every denomination should delight to concur in it, resembling in this manner the lights of the planetary system, which move each in a distinct orbit; which hang some in the higher, and some in the lower regions of the air; but which harmonize, nevertheless, in their benignant influences, and unite and blend their rays.

V. The incorruptibility and superiority of christian principles are couched under this metaphor. Light, which is the purest of all bodies, possesses this remarkable property, that it is incapable of receiving defilement from any object, however disagreeable, with which it may come in contact. And the religion of Christ is strongly assimilated to it in this particular, by its superiority, in the breast of him who has received it, to contamination from worldly and debasing society. He that is actuated by it, will not, indeed, court the society of those who serve another master, and who have no fellow-feeling in his sorrows and joys; for what communion has light with darkness? But in those worldly associations which his circumstances compel him to make, and from which his benevolent feelings would prompt him not wholly to withdraw himself, he may be trusted with safety. His principles need not fear a competition with those of the men of this world: the fair exhibition of them may recover some who have wandered from the right way, but they can never be admitted as inferior, in the estimation of a sober judgment, to any of those by which they are opposed. Let him go then, wherever duty calls him, without fear; not doubting but the God whom he serves is able to keep him from falling; and let him seek to approve himself as one of the sons of God,

who are blameless and harmless, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom they shine, without receiving contamination, as "lights in the world."

In that contest between truth and error—righteousness and sin, of which the world at present is the theatre, no doubt can be entertained respecting the party, to which final victory is certain. It is the contest of light with darkness. Already the sun of truth appears above the horizon; and every attempt to impede its course, or prevent it from ultimately dispelling the darkness of superstition and vice from the globe, is but as the struggle of a vapour against the glorious orb of day.

1. Christians are the light of the world. But let them not, on this account, ascribe any thing to themselves. The good that is done by them, as well as the good that is wrought in them, must be attributed to the sovereign pleasure and grace of the Almighty. They owe their usefulness to his divine agency. "Not I," must be the motto of the christian philanthropist, "but the grace of God that was with me." This truth ought to acquire an influence over our minds, that will be felt in those moments, when the adoption of our plans by others, the success of our endeavours, the most interesting results from our exertions, tempt us to self-gratulation. The humility of a Christian needs not, for its promotion, his imperfections, and his sins: its existence and exercise are amply provided for by the gospel, amidst the brightest blaze of excellence that may surround him, or the mightiest and most important effects that may accrue from his labours.

2. Are Christians the light of the world? What then are we to say respecting those of them who fear

the Lord, and obey the voice of his servant, and yet walk in darkness? We must distinguish between the light of holiness, and the light of comfort. It is possible for the judgment to have a correct bias, and for the mind to be under the dominion of righteous principles, while the heart is the seat of penitential grief, or the prey of uneasy apprehensions. The office of the Spirit, as a sanctifier, may be discharged apart from that of a comforter. Dejection, in itself, is no argument against the soundness of our conversion. It has been the partial experience of the most eminent servants of God. But the light of consolation is withheld from such only for a season. For wise and gracious reasons, it may please him to hide his face from us, whose countenance alone can gladden the soul. This may take place either to correct our folly, or to exercise our faith, or to promote our vigilance, or to qualify us for the office, in future, of speaking a word in season to him who is weary. But it behoves us to remember, that we are assured, in that word, to the truth of whose promises our experience furnishes indubitable evidence, that "light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

3. Are Christians the light of the world? What then shall we say of those persons who combine, with the profession of a scriptural creed, unholy and criminal practices? Men there have been, in all ages, who hold the truth in unrighteousness. They enter into a fatal compromise between the dictates of the judgment, and the claims of the passions. Of these men, it may be said, that they have furnished the adversaries of truth with their principal arguments, and placed the

most envenomed dart in the quiver of infidelity. To have *perverted* the truth, will involve men in a deeper guilt, and expose them to a severer doom, than to have refused it admission into their minds. "For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." Let such professors of religion pause and reflect.—It is no slight crime to have rendered nugatory, as far as our influence extended, that instrument which is designed for the conversion of mankind. Between the seducer, and the false-hearted professor, no other difference is discernible, than what is to be traced between the open enemy, and the disguised traitor.

4. Are Christians the light of the world? Then what are we to think of that world which they are sent to illuminate? "We are of God," says the Apostle John, "and the whole world lieth in wickedness." Affecting declaration. Two classes only compose mankind—the world and the church. Seriously should we consider, whether we have any claim to be considered as belonging to the church of Christ. We have either passed from death to life—from darkness to light—and from the power of Satan to the kingdom of God's dear Son, or else we are in the gall of bitterness, and the bonds of iniquity. And is it possible for a man to be indifferent to this subject? Nothing less than his eternal destiny is at stake. A few moments, and the die for him may be cast. Then if he find himself in darkness, it will be darkness that admits of no relief. "Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you; for he that walketh in darkness, knoweth not whither he goeth."

ORIGINAL ESSAYS, COMMUNICATIONS, &c.

ON THE GREAT PRINCIPLE OF
THE REFORMATION.*Why even of yourselves judge ye
not what is right?*

JESUS CHRIST.

THERE is no inquiry which presents a more extensive and interesting field to the philosopher, to the historian, and to the believer in divine revelation, than the influence which religion has, in all ages, obtained over the character, the conduct, and the happiness of mankind. In tracing causes and effects, the philosopher discovers the most momentous results to have been produced by the reception and belief of certain truths and principles, which are invariably ascribed to celestial intercourse and communication. The historian will not fail to notice the progress and influence of that alliance, which the powers of this world have always sought to form with the ministers of religion, in order to render subservient to their political views and purposes, that mighty engine, which acts equally upon the hopes and fears, the pursuits and desires, of mankind. And the believer in Jesus, while he examines the history of the christian church from the days of its Founder, and by the rules and orders of its establishment by the apostles in the age of its primitive purity and simplicity, through the periods of darkness, corruption, and profligacy, which so soon, and so fatally succeeded, will be ready to acknowledge the finger of Divine Providence, as he approaches that glorious era of the Reformation, when divine truth like the meridian sun burst upon the world in all its power, refulgence, and beauty. Religion, when addressed to man as an intelligent and

accountable creature, must necessarily be considered as a personal concern. All its sanctions, and all its promises, are applicable in an individual point of view. The right of private judgment, and the necessity of examination and inquiry, are invariably maintained, and urged as the prerogative of nature, as the foundation upon which religion is established, and to the exercise of which it constantly makes its appeal. The progress of light and knowledge, must necessarily precede the reception of divine truth. As well might we expect the traveller to pursue his way with safety and precision in the hour of midnight darkness, as that religion should be cordially embraced, or faithfully regarded, where the mind is bewildered, the understanding fettered, and the heart vicious and corrupt. The progress of Christianity in the world, must be promoted by the adaptation of those means, which are best calculated to advance its cause and interest. This in the general course of providence is confirmed by history and experience; and in the use of such second causes we have the surest ground of confidence in looking for that heavenly influence, without which, all our labours, and all our efforts, will be attended with no success. It cannot, however, be denied, but that effects are, through the overruling providence of God, sometimes produced by causes which seem very remote from those momentous consequences which afterwards ensued. But this can never be considered as a reason for lessening, in any degree, our attention or application to that line of conduct, which wisdom and prudence point out as most likely to promote what we ap-

prove, or secure what we desire. In the present age of the world, the instruction of the lower classes of society, and the dissemination of the pure word of God, seem to promise the revival of that spirit, and a recurrence to that purity and simplicity, which so eminently characterised the church of Christ, in the times of the apostles, and their immediate successors. But without the acknowledgment of that grand principle,—the right of private judgment in matters of religion,—the circulation and examination of the Scriptures will never produce their natural and genuine effects, in making men wise unto salvation. If the interpretations of erring creatures, however learned or pious, if the decrees and decisions of councils and synods, are to be regarded as of equal, or superior value, to the communications of his divine will; how will the inquirer after religious truth be perplexed, bewildered, and confounded? He will perceive that men, in the same rank and station, in different periods, and ages of the church, have widely differed from each other, and have with the same tenacity and the same authority maintained the most opposite conclusions. He will remark that even councils and synods, after declaring, with all the solemnity of priestcraft, and the arrogance of bigotry, what was to be received and regarded as of divine authority, have, by succeeding councils and synods, had all their proceedings abrogated, and their decisions denied, and condemned as erroneous.

The usurpation of spiritual dominion over the reasoning powers of man, may be considered as the commencement of religious darkness and delusion; an event of all others the most deeply to be deplored by every advocate for the simplicity of the truth as it is in

Jesus. And while this unscriptural empire is supported and encouraged, it is vain to expect that general influence which the knowledge of the word of God is so admirably adapted to produce. No wonder that those who were so tenacious of the authority and decisions of the church, should, at the period of the Reformation, use all their efforts to wrest the Bible from the hands of the people, and to stifle that spirit of examination and inquiry, which the reformers were so anxious to promote. For the constitution of a christian church, the authority and number of its officers, and the government of its members, where shall we seek for information and guidance, if not from the New Testament? From whom shall we form our model, if not from the example of those, who, as the first followers of Christ, best understood the nature, the end, and the design of his kingdom? Were we solicitous to analyse the properties of any celebrated spring or fountain, should we commence our operations, where, in the course of its progress, it had been united with other streams less pure and salutary, or with those which were known to be bitter and unwholesome;—should we not rather in this examination proceed to its head, where its purity could not be questioned; where its virtues could not be corrupted; where its effects and influence could not be mistaken?

The great principle upon which the Reformation is built, and upon which its advocates proceeded, was undoubtedly the principle which these observations have brought forward, with a design of placing it in a point of view proportionate to its greatness and importance. If the reformers in the fifteenth century did not act upon this principle, they did not go to the fountain head of divine truth, but partook of the stream

after it was polluted, and mixed with the filth and the mire of the world. If this was not the ground of their proceedings, in resisting the usurpations and corruptions of the church of Rome, there is no other principle upon which their conduct can be defended, or their example held up to the applause and imitation of succeeding generations. If implicit obedience to ecclesiastical power, and non-resistance to corrupt, licentious, and unscriptural practices in the exercise of religion, be the duty of all men, then were the reformers rebellious and disobedient in resisting the authority, and unmasking the enormities, of the Romish church. As members of her body, and priests of her altar, upon what principle, but that of judging for themselves, could they lift up against her the arm of hostility, unveil her hypocrisy, and expose her deformities to the eyes of an indignant, abused, and oppressed populace? If the church had a *right* to decree *one* article of faith, or impose *one* rule or order in the administration of religion, it had the same right, if it thought good, to decree and impose a thousand, or ten thousand: and of the nature of these articles, and the tendency of these orders, she alone was declared to be sole and sovereign judge. It was of no importance how corrupt, how immoral, how unscriptural were her commands and injunctions, for they were upon her declaration alone to be received and obeyed as pure, as holy, as catholic! If then we give up the right of private judgment in matters of religion, if we deny the necessity of a recurrence to the Scriptures as the sole rule and authority of Christians, then indeed we must regard the Reformation as schism, and must brand the reformers as mistaken, designing, and factious men. Such we know from history, is the light

in which this glorious event, and these benefactors of mankind are held and regarded by all the adherents to the See of St. Peter. The spirit of popery is not changed, its evil and malignant genius may, from the events and circumstances of the age, be more concealed, than formerly, from public observation; like the viper in the fable, restore its strength, and you will soon have cause to lament its poisonous nature and influence. Every hierarchy, whether papal or protestant, which usurps to itself spiritual dominion and dictation; and by anathemas, pains, and penalties, vainly seeks to promote uniformity and obedience, must condemn the principles of the Reformation, must stigmatise, as sectarians and schismatics, those men who lived and died in the cause of religious truth and liberty. But thanks be to God, the principle of the Reformation is that of the Gospel,—the right of inquiry, the duty of examination,—what the Lord of Christians bequeathed to his followers, and what, from the sacred word of prophecy, we believe shall in the end triumphantly prevail.

While as members of the Romish church, however the reformers were offended with the absurdities, errors, and impieties, to which they were called to afford their sanction, they had no occasion, when awakened to the duty of examination, and the necessity of resistance, to call the attention of mankind to any new or dangerous opinion, to any course which before was unknown and untried, or to any principle of human contrivance and invention; it was only necessary for them to proclaim the rights of nature, to publish the positive commands of Christ, and to unfold to the eager attention of their fellow creatures the volume of divine revelation. For many ages those sacred records

had been prohibited from the examination, and carefully concealed from the knowledge, of the people, which in the primitive church were constantly read, and offered to the perusal of all who were desirous to know the things that were written for their faith, and for their salvation. The alliance between the things of Cæsar, and the things of God, which took place in the reign of Constantine the Great, was followed by that spiritual usurpation and dominion, which the Bishops of Rome gradually acquired, and which brought on those ages of deplorable ignorance and darkness, corruption and vice, which disgrace the annals of the church for so many centuries. The profligate and vicious lives of the higher order of the priesthood, without exempting the fountain of infallibility, the Pope, with the ignorance, idleness, and rapacity of the intermediate and lower orders of the clergy, had been long and severely felt, bitterly and impatiently endured by the peasantry, and inferior members of the Romish communion. But so fast were the fetters which bound the human mind, so general the prevalence of ignorance and superstition, and so strong the combination of power, of interest, and corruption, that every hope of deliverance and emancipation appeared visionary and delusive. Religious darkness and slavery tended to increase and confirm the hardships and vassalage of the feudal system, and consequently to render more secure the tyranny of despotic princes and rulers. The reign of the Inquisition was the reign of terror: mysterious and alarming in its informations, dark and subtle in its proceedings, cruel and vindictive in its spirit, and so extensive and irresistible in the operations of its power,

that all trembled at the bare mention of its name. With such a monster for its support, aided and courted by all the potentates of Europe, and surrounded by a multitude of blind zealots, and intriguing priests, who could have anticipated the day as ready to dawn, when Babylon the mighty should be shaken to her centre, when a few obscure, but able and enlightened men, should give a blow to her power, and a wound to her heart, which, notwithstanding all the sympathy, kindness, and nursing, she has experienced in the present day, must lead to her death and funeral obsequies? The Pope may be restored, the Inquisition may be re-established, the order of the Jesuits may be revived, the reign of priestcraft, of persecution, of darkness, and delusion, may be eulogized, and anticipated;—but light has burst upon the human soul, the sun blazes in his meridian strength and glory, and who shall restrain his beams, or circumscribe his influence? The Bible is gone forth, mighty to conquer; and millions, who, like numbers in the days of Luther, knew not what a New Testament was, have now the Scriptures in their hands and in their mouths; and what is of far greater importance, they have them in their hearts; and thus armed, who dreads the issue, when urged to the combat against error and imposture? Admiring the principles of the Reformation, we hail with gratitude the christian philanthropy of the present day, and trace, in the institutions of Britain, the dissemination of those great religious truths, which render men not only free, but happy and blessed. The art of printing, the translation of the Scriptures into such a variety of native tongues, with the prevalence of literature and science, seem, in the present age, to con-

demn all forebodings of a painful and melancholy nature, and to lead us to expect results and consequences, the most honourable to God, the most glorious to the cause of the Redeemer, and the most beneficial to the human race. Yet we ought not to relax in our exertions; the enemy is still vigilant and active, sowing his tares among the wheat. There are numbers who look with a jealous eye on the religious institutions of the present day. They behold, with uneasiness, the growing strength of those who are friends to civil and religious liberty. They lament the progress of what they are pleased to call the cause of fanaticism, or, in other words, the prevalence of the modes, the institutions, and the doctrines, of Christ and his Apostles. The Bible they imagine cannot stand without some human prop, cannot be understood without some human exposition, cannot be enforced without some *duly* qualified and *ordained* minister. They enlarge on the mischievous consequences of the people being exhorted to study the *pure* word of God, and would with pleasure, dare they avow the sentiment, act towards the friends of religious liberty, as the papists would gladly have done in the days of Luther, when they wished him and his New Testament shut up for ever in one of the dungeons of the Inquisition. That such men as Wickliffe, Tyndale, and Knox, Luther, Melancthon, and Calvin, should excite the enmity, and have to contend with the prejudices, if not with the hatred of numbers, cannot be surprising to those who are familiar with the page of history, or acquainted with the constitution of the human heart. Reformers have always been opposed with acrimony and bitterness by those, who, being benefited, are zealous

in support of existing corruptions. Discussion and inquiry is an ordeal to which such men dare not advance. It is establishing a principle and practice in religion they are most unwilling to admit. It is submitting that infallibility and that authority to the exercise of reason, and the examination of Scripture, which they are ever solicitous should be regarded as hallowed and sacred. Armed with power, the weapons of their defence are not those of reason and argument, but those of oppression and persecution; and in proportion to the weakness and unsoundness of their cause, is the pride, the rancour, and the hatred with which they treat their opposers. In holding up the reformers of England and Germany to the grateful admiration of protestants, we do not mean to pass encomiums upon every part of their conduct, or to extol their temper and spirit upon every occasion. They were men, under the strong influence of party zeal, confident in their own integrity, and the goodness of their cause, bold and daring in all their attacks; and, owing to the rude and unpolished state of society in the 15th century, frequently conducted their controversies with a harshness and incivility, not to be allowed in the present age of knowledge and refinement. Upon this occasion, the theological doctrines of popery, as being repugnant to the Scriptures, to reason, and the knowledge and practice of the primitive church, with the immediate causes which roused the reformers into action, and the consideration of the extensive and growing consequences of their separation from the church of Rome, have been reserved for some future number. We clearly perceive the great principle upon which they acted, upon which their conduct is approved,

and held up to the imitation of succeeding generations. Claiming as protestant dissenters, the right of private judgment for ourselves, we are ever ready to grant it to others; trusting that our faith is built upon the evangelists and the apostles, and ever looking to the influence of the spirit of grace and truth, we invite inquiry, and are fearless of its issue. If our position be founded upon a rock, if our ground be firm and not to be shaken, then is our confidence great, our expectations bright, and our experience will be glorious and triumphant. L. L.

THE GENEVA BIBLE.

IN 1535, the whole Bible was published in English, under the name of Miles Coverdale, who was made a bishop in the reign of Edward the Sixth. It is supposed to have been printed abroad, as no place is mentioned; but it was allowed by royal authority to be imported, and used in England. In 1537, it was re-published with some corrections, in the name of Thomas Mathews. This, however, was a fictitious name, the real editor being John Rogers, one of Tyndale's associates, who concealed both his own name and Tyndale's, on account of the odium attached to them. John Rogers, alias Mathews, was burnt in the reign of Mary. In 1539, a new edition was published by Grafton and Whitechurch, which, on account of its size, was called the Great Bible. Of this Bible, Coverdale was the corrector, and therefore, it is substantially the same with the former. The Psalms of this edition are still used in the English Liturgy. In 1540, it was re-published by Archbishop Cranmer, and this edition commonly goes by the name of Cranmer's Bible. A number of editions of the Scriptures, perhaps

each differing a little from the former, appeared in the latter part of Henry's reign, and during the reign of his successor, Edward. On these we have little to remark of importance.

After the death of Edward, Mary succeeded to the throne of England, and immediately began to overturn the work of her brother. Cranmer fell a sacrifice to her rage, and with him many other of the friends of the Reformation. Those who could, escaped for their lives, and took up their abode in some of the protestant states of the continent. Bishop Coverdale retired to Geneva, where, along with Anthony Gilby, William Whittingham, Christopher Woodman, Thomas Sampson, and Thomas Cole; to whom some add John Knox, John Bodleigh, and John Pullain, he devoted himself to the revision of the English translation of the Bible. They published the New Testament in 1557, and the whole Bible in 1560. As it was printed at Geneva, and its translators all known to be Calvinists, it obtained the name, which it still retains, of the Geneva Bible. The translators were men of learning and piety, and from their residence in Geneva, probably enjoyed the advice and assistance of Calvin and Beza. Their version obtained such celebrity, that it went through thirty editions in folio, quarto, and octavo, in the space of fifty years. It was the first English Bible in which the verses are distinguished by numeral figures; Robert Stephens having thus divided and numbered an edition of the *Greek New Testament*, published by him a few years before.

The translators avow that they made their version from the originals, but that they also consulted a number of translations in divers tongues. They entitle the New Testament,—“The Newe

Testament of our Lorde Jesus Christ, conferred diligently with the Greeke, and best approved translations." I understand this title to intimate, that they took the former English version for the basis of their own, examined it closely by the original text, and the other versions, and altered it only where they found it to be necessary. Father Simon says, they made it from the French version, which is no farther true, than that the French was no doubt one of the translations which they used in revising it.

The Geneva version, though more literal than Tyndale's and Coverdale's, is by no means so literal as our present translation. The authors, at least in many instances, saw the impropriety of rendering the Hebrew idioms word for word into another language. They tell us, "where the Hebrew speech seemed hardly to agree with ours, we noted it in the margin, using that which was more intelligible." And it is really matter of astonishment and regret, that James's translators often altered the former version for a worse, merely to make it more literal. "The Song of Songs," the Geneva version justly renders, "An excellent Song, which was Solomon's;" far better than ours; or than, "The Ballet of Ballets of Solomon," in the Bishop's Bible. But the difference between the two versions appears chiefly in the renderings of the connective particles. The Geneva translators use much more freedom with these than their successors. The Hebrew particles being very few in number, are used with great latitude of signification, and the same is the case with the Greek particles which correspond with them, as may be seen by consulting Macknight's fourth preliminary essay. The 43d chapter of Genesis, for example, contains 34 verses; 28 of which, in our trans-

lation, begin with the conjunction *and*; this is an unnecessary, tiresome, and inelegant repetition. In the Geneva, *and* begins only 17 of the verses; and instead of it, they use the other particles, *now, but, then, so, who, afterwards*; these correspond equally with the Hebrew *tau*, and render the translation *more smooth and agreeable* than that which professes to be an improvement of it.

The Geneva translators make considerable use of *italic* supplements; and the sense of many passages is attempted to be eked out by these additions. Though this mode of translating is not to be commended, yet a free translation conveying some meaning is better than a barbarous literal one conveying no meaning at all. The nature of some of these supplements may be understood from the following passages. "Now I know that the Lord is greater than all the gods: for as they have dealt proudly with them, *so are they recompensed*." Exod. xviii. 11. "So the children of Israel laid their good raiment from them, *after Moses came down from Mount Horeb*." Exod. xxxiii. 6. "Therefore now if thou pardon their sin, *thy mercy shall appear*: but if thou wilt not," &c. Exod. xxxii. 32. "Reserving mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression and sin, and not making *the wicked innocent*." Exod. xxxiv. 7.

In several passages the renderings ought, perhaps, to be preferred to our own version. "To know," is better than "to wit." Gen. xxiv. 21. "My term is ended." I prefer to "my days are fulfilled." Gen. xxix. 21. "The passover," Acts xii. 4. is infinitely better than *Easter*, of which Luke had no knowledge; and *love*, throughout the 13th chapter of the 1st of Corinthians, is more correct than the *charity* substituted in its room. They seem to

have been doubtful about the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and therefore they designate it simply, "the Epistle to the Hebrews."

This version often retains the original words as proper names, where our translation gives a version of them. Thus Mesopotamia, is, "Avam Nahavaim;" "the threshing floor of Atad," is, "Goven Atad;" "An open place," Gen. xxxviii. 14. is, "Petah Enaim;" "the tabernacle of the congregation," is, "Ohel Meod;" and so in many other places.

The following are a few specimens of improper renderings, which look rather odd to us. "The angel who hath delivered me from all evil bless the children,—that they may grow as fishes into a multitude in the middle of the earth." Gen. xlviii. 16. Manna they express by the three letters which form the word, *Man*; this has rather a ludicrous effect in two places. "And the children of Israel did eat *man* forty years; they did eat *man* till they came to the borders of the land of Canaan." Exodus xvi. 35. "This *man* also was as coriander seed, and his colour like the colour of bdellium; and when the dew fell down upon the host, the *man* fell with it." Numb. xi. 7—9. What is in our version;—"the Lord gave the word; great was the company of those that published it;" is, in the Geneva;—"The Lord gave matter to the women to tell of the great army." Psalm lxviii. 11.

Very different opinions have been given of the merits of the Geneva translation. King James declared it was the worst he had seen; but, with all deference to royal authority, I think his Majesty was mistaken; and that his opinion was more influenced by the notes connected with this

version, and by fear, lest the divine right of legitimate monarchy should suffer, than by pure regard for the word of God. When it is known, that James affirmed, that the notes were "partial, untrue, seditious, and savouring too much of dangerous and traitorous conceits," no one need be surprised at his condemnation and rooted dislike of the Geneva Bible. It may inform and amuse the reader, perhaps, to be furnished with a specimen or two of these dangerous and traitorous notes. On the disobedience of the Hebrew mid-wives to the royal mandate, it is remarked,— "Their disobedience herein was lawful, but their dissembling evil;" and on the subsequent conduct of Pharaoh, it is observed,— "When tyrants cannot prevail by craft, they burst forth into open rage." Exodus i. 19—22. On the description which Samuel gives of the manner of the king that should reign over Israel, 1 Sam. viii. 11. it is noted,— "Not that kings have this authority by their office, but that such as reign in God's wrath should usurp this over their brethren, contrary to the law. Deut. xvii. 10. "On Saul's behaviour to David, they remark,— "Though this tyrant saw, and confessed the favour of God toward David, yet he ceased not to persecute him contrary to his own conscience." 1 Sam. xxiv. 21. On the conduct of Rehoboam, 1 Kings xii. 9, they say,— "There is nothing harder for them that are in authority, than to bridle their affections, and follow good counsel." On Jezebel's treatment of Naboth, they observe,— "This example of monstrous cruelty, the Holy Ghost leaveth to us, to this intent, that we should abhor all tyranny, especially in them, whom nature and kind should move to be pitiful, and inclined to mercy."

1 Kings xxi. 15. They were even bold enough to justify the doctrine of punishing kings with death. On the behaviour of Asa, who deposed his mother Maachah, on account of her idolatries, they say,—“Herein he showed that he lacked zeal: for she ought to have died, both by the covenant, as verse 13, and by the law of God: but he gave place to foolish pity, and would also seem, after a sort, to satisfy the law.” 2 Chron. xv. 16.

It is not at all wonderful, that a man, so conceited of his theological attainments, and so jealous of his kingly prerogative, as James, should be offended with that blunt honesty which calls things by their proper names, and with the decided avowal of sentiments most inimical to his unfounded pretensions and lordly authority. We discover in these notes the same lofty decision, and undissembled dislike of tyranny and despotism, which so strongly marked the character of the Scottish reformer; which, notwithstanding the opposition of James, soon spread widely in England; and which finally issued in wresting from the throne that liberty which now constitutes the glory and security both of the monarch and the people. Had James, and his successor, listened to the plain unvarnished counsels of such men as the Geneva translators, instead of the fulsome flattery and misguided views of men full of high blown notions of kingly ecclesiastical domination, they might have prevented the awful miseries which befel their country, and, at last, overwhelmed themselves.

Dr. Campbell does not appear to have had a very high opinion of the Geneva version; and Dr. Macknight tells us, it was better esteemed at its first appearance, than it hath been in latter times. But these learned wri-

ters are known to have had no good opinion of the dogmata of the school of Geneva: and their dislike to it, was, no doubt, partly influenced by their considering it (to use Macknight's own words) “calculated to support the doctrine and discipline of the Calvinistic party.” Dr. Geddes again, who equally despised Calvinism and Arminianism, makes no hesitation in declaring, that he thinks it, in general, better than that of King James's translators. Although I do not fully accord with this view of it, I do not think the Geneva will suffer much in comparison with our own. Had the latter translators differed less from the former, than they have done in many places, it would have been highly advantageous to their work. In this opinion I find I am supported by the learned author of the life of Knox.* “God is our witness,” say the Geneva translators, that we have, by all means, endeavoured to set forth the purity of the word, and right sense of the Holy Ghost, for the edification of the brethren, in faith and charity.” May every translator of the Bible be able to say the same thing with a good conscience! W. O.

Perth, Feb. 1, 1818.

ON THE POWER OF AN EVIL CONSCIENCE.

It may perhaps admit of dispute, whether the term *evil*, as employed by the Apostle, in Heb. x. 22. signifies a conscience that does not fulfil its office, or a conscience under the impression of guilt, and

* “Notwithstanding this expression of disapprobation,” (King James's,) says Dr. M'Crie, “it is evident, that the translators appointed by his authority, made great use of it; and if they had followed it still more, the version which they have given us, would, upon the whole, have been improved.”—Life of Knox, vol. i. page 210.

full of the images of anticipated punishment. The latter is the sense in which the term *evil* will be here understood; and as it is no part of my intention to explain the passage referred to, but simply to borrow from it a distinct phrase, I may be allowed to pass on at once, to the illustration of the subject, stated in the title of the paper. There is a mighty and mysterious power in conscience. No single faculty of our constitution is so intimately connected with the enjoyment of life, and none capable of exerting such an influence over death. It possesses the extraordinary qualities of the most active poison, or the most pure and powerful elixir in the cup of human happiness. It is that inner self, which, as it smiles or frowns on the outer self, can change the whole element of life into darkness and terror; or spread over it the serenity and the fragrance of heaven. There is no part of our mental and moral constitution, so little cultivated, and so much abused. In most cases, no care is employed to inform and enlighten conscience by the word and will of God; and when it checks or condemns the obliquities of human conduct, it does so, more from the feeble promptings of its primitive strength, or the yet unextinguished light which burns in it, however dimly, than from a full and strong recognition of the divine authority. Observing the silence of conscience, in some instances, and the ease with which its struggles may be pacified in others, men come to disregard it totally, and pay little or no respect to its LATENT POWER, or the possibility of its rising suddenly and irresistibly, to assert the rights, and exhibit the displeasure of God. We forget, that, however successful we may be in quieting its voice, or confining it to the impenetrable

recesses of our own heart, there is one avenue which cannot be closed, and which must ever remain accessible to God;—an ear always directed upwards to the heavens, in which, he that formed us and knows what is in us, can always make his voice to be heard. This is one remarkable evidence, that God has put man under a moral government; and made preparation, in the capacities and circumstances of his nature, for a future and final adjustment of all mortal affairs.

The conscience of itself, has no power to wound or alarm us. It possesses such a faculty only in retribution, and never exerts it, till it has itself been wounded. It is a judge which is a terror only to *evil doers*. It must have some evil act, or series of actions, as its criminal. It may indeed be prevented from doing its duty towards them. It may be fettered, it may be hood-winked, it may be asleep. But it may not: and if it is, it is always liable to be roused against a wicked man. A whisper may wake it from a long and deep slumber, and then it may set about its neglected duty with tenfold diligence. Who would wish to put a sword into the hand of a justly provoked enemy? Yet how little do we think of the power which, from what are termed small sins, growing into greater by habit and repetition, conscience is accumulating against us. The silence it may keep within, is no criterion of its want of power to harm us; it may only be under-working to a greater extent; it may only be kept the more closely pent up, to burst forth with a more complete destruction. The power of conscience, therefore, ought to be distinctly and constantly recognised, that we may guard both against offending, and against repressing it. It ought to be most carefully cultivated in children

and young persons; and especially should it be well instructed in those principles of revelation, by which it is required to act. The word of God is its paramount authority; the light it is to hold up; the rock on which it is to stand. It is one great end of religious instruction, to make men feel the power, with which God has endowed conscience, either to accuse or acquit: so that, according to the notion of the ancients, they may feel it like an *attendant spirit*, recording every action, and thought, and word; depositing these records in the memory, and possessing the power of inflicting the deepest anguish, or imparting the strongest support, at any subsequent exhibition of them. This faculty of the soul, therefore, should be viewed as the clear mirror of human life to each individual self, on which, while the eye of reason is open, it must turn sooner or later, occasionally or more frequently, to meet the images of its former self. No man must be allowed to suppose, that he can finally prevail in averting his sense of moral vision, from the faithful records of the memory. He must, at intervals, take a *full length view* of himself, in this mysterious mirror. An eye more penetrating than that of the lightning, may be pointed at him. The darkness which is the element of sin cannot shut out the flash of conviction; but when that flash comes, it may make darkness itself visible and sensible; and that which covered and pacified, may then terrify the sinner. The light of conviction can pierce through to the darkest chamber of imagery in the heart, and at God's bidding, it can exhibit those polluted images to scare and afflict the soul. The sun has not unaptly been termed the eye of the world: it manifests itself, and it makes visible other objects.

The conscience then, is both the sun and the eye of the soul, not only for the element of light which it creates, or the moral perception it possesses, but, like the eye, for its sensibility. Before it is seared, and habituated to sin, it possesses an exquisite tenderness, which it is the object of the divine law to cultivate and protect. The slightest speck, or smallest atom, will cause intense anguish to the *seeing* eye, but none to that which is rayless and dead: and so great is the difference between a tender, and a seared conscience, or between an accusing and a sleeping one. The importance of guarding this sense of moral vision from injury, will be apparent still further, by looking only at the unhappy creature, who has sinned often and deeply, against light and conviction, but who has not found the healing balm of divine mercy. Guilt has kindled its flaming torch within him, and set on fire the whole course of that nature, which burns without being consumed. He goes back in imagination to the first step he took in his vicious career; that first act of folly and crime, which stood so closely, but not so visibly, linked with those that followed; he marks how his reluctance diminished as he went on; and how familiarity and habit reconciled his principles, and all but silenced his conscience. Link by link he bound around him, what he then thought the golden chain of liberty, but that which he now finds to be the iron fetter of his lusts, a chain which he can neither break nor uncoil, and which, the more he struggles and writhes, only inflicts a deeper wound, and a more exquisite pang. It should be profoundly impressed upon the mind, that guilt in the soul is a poison different from all others; it cannot destroy that which it infects. It has an immortal being for its subject. When

once the poisoned arrow of sin is levelled at the conscience, it strikes not an invulnerable, but an incorruptible part: there it may live and rankle, but never die; the hand of divine mercy may extract it, but no other can.

Conscience is a faculty that must act upon some law or rule of duty; and its power of tormenting is regulated by the authority of the law that has been violated. The law of God is sustained by the authority of God; the authority of God is connected with his power; and, therefore, an accusing conscience can employ all the power of God against a sinner. Thus a man's own faculties turn his tormentors; he becomes a fugitive from himself; his own consciousness is his greatest curse; and his fiercest enemy lies in his own bosom. Now in this state he has no power whatever against his accusing conscience. It will go back, at pleasure, over years of long forgotten sins, while memory carries before him a lamp which casts a lurid light over the scenes of other days, and imagination stands ready to supply fresh images and forms of terror, on every new discovery. Thus conscience, the inexorable judge, that will not be bribed, and cannot be silenced; that has no affections to be moved, and no fears to be excited, proceeds to accumulate one verdict of condemnation upon another. The tears of the culprit are as unavailing as his courage; and though he may have once cast the veil of darkness over his deeds, he cannot now draw the veil of oblivion over the recollection of them. He might as soon bribe the sun to withdraw his beams from the day, as conscience to turn aside the light of conviction from his heart. The vigour, and the sublimity of his imagination, may become accessory

to his torment. It may add a gloom beyond the power of language to describe; it may raise him to a greater height, and spread beneath his feet a deeper abyss, only to augment the terrors of his apprehended fall. The conception of that undefinable, but certain and mysterious thing, ETERNITY,—which casts an air of divine awfulness, and of infinity, round every object that is connected with it; the new forms and quickened capacities of suffering that may await him in it, from being left in the word of God unlimited, may create fresh and fresh associations of terror, until his imagination sinks exhausted from the effort, but without having reached the height, or depth, or breadth, or length of his suffering.—How vain are power, riches, or pleasures, to relieve such a state of mind! They may augment the anguish, by the recollection of the means by which they have been attained; or, by the contrast, they will soon form to the state of the soul; but they have no more power to silence conscience, than the command of a king to hush the roaring thunder.

Conscience is a temple—the temple of righteousness; and it must be kept as sacred as the sanctuary of God; otherwise, the divinity of that temple will assert his own rights, and prove that he is no dumb and powerless idol. When we awaken conscience, we incense a Deity, which, at his voice, can rouse every object, and every element of creation against us: can make the silence of midnight speak;—can change the darkness into light;—and fill infinite space with witnesses and avengers: a shadow shall smite us with the hand of Omnipotence, and a leaf shall fall with the terrors of an earthquake. The voice of an accu-

sing conscience will unnerve the strongest arm, and embarrass the firmest step. It makes the blood creep fearfully along the veins; it makes "the seated heart knock at the ribs;" it stops the breath, and fills the vision with sights, and the ear with sounds, which are real only to the unhappy subject himself. Such power has conscience: it is the beginning of torment on earth, and it will be the aggravation of it hereafter.—The gospel of Christ is the *only*, and is a *complete* relief, for an accusing conscience. It presents that law of God which gives conscience its power, honoured and satisfied in the sacrifice of a Saviour. He is represented as pouring out his blood to cleanse us from an evil conscience.—While the justice of God *arms* the accusing conscience, the cross of Christ can *disarm* it: and nothing else can. The Apostle said, "the *sting* of death is sin, and the *strength* of sin is the law: but thanks be to God that giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." At some future opportunity, I may attempt to pourtray the joys of the purified conscience.

MOSES.

ON THE RESURRECTION.

The series of papers on this important subject, of which the following is the commencement, formed the substance of a discourse delivered before the Monthly Association of Independent Ministers and Churches at the Rev. G. Ford's Meeting House, Stegny; and is inserted in this Magazine by particular request.

No. I.

The Proof of the Resurrection of Christ.

IF there be a fact on record, the evidence of which amounts to demonstration, that fact is, the re-

surrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. I should not venture too much, were I to assert, that there is no historical fact, the evidence of which is so abundant. Never was testimony more calculated to satisfy the mind:—never was testimony more abundantly confirmed by collateral proof.

Our belief of the resurrection of Christ, is founded chiefly on the credibility of the apostles, who were the witnesses of the event. "If Christ be not raised," said Paul, "we are found false witnesses of God." Their intellectual competency to judge of the facts which passed under their observation, needs no proof. This is placed beyond dispute, by a perusal of their writings; and by considering the influence which they gained over others, together with the manner in which that influence was used. Twelve idiots could never have effected what was accomplished by the twelve apostles;—could never have established a society so extraordinary in its character—so wide in its extent—so mighty in its influence. If these men were not remarkably assisted by heaven, they must have been the most extraordinary prodigies the world ever saw.

As we cannot doubt their competence, so neither have we any reason to suspect their *integrity*. Surely that man must be strangely addicted to dark suspicion, there must be something more than caution in *his* character, who, guided by their history, can trace the steps of these men,—can minutely observe their actions,—can examine their writings,—can inspect the system of morals which they attempted to establish, and the practice of which they professed to be examples, and can deliberately charge them, without one single proof taken from their general deportment, without one reason but his own dis-

belief of their assertions, with being the basest hypocrites whose lives ever disgraced the history of mankind. For it must never be forgotten, that on the supposition of the testimony borne by the apostles being false, they were the most wicked of men; on the supposition of its being true, they were the greatest benefactors the world ever saw. The case admits of no medium. They were either models of excellence, or the most base, and despicable, and mischievous of men. But for this charge, there might be some plausibility, if any sufficient reason for their conduct could be assigned. The cases of imposition are few indeed, in which the motives of the impostor may not be detected. Either honour, wealth, or power, or all combined, have been the lures by which men have been induced to resign their principles, to sacrifice their eternal hopes, or have endeavoured to persuade themselves, while they bore a contrary testimony to others, that eternity was a dream. We have only to remember the sufferings, the certain prospects of these men, prospects which as it regards this world, grew darker every day, to be convinced, that not by all, nor by either of these motives, could they have been actuated. If in this life only they had hope in Christ, they were of all men the most miserable. Indeed, of the various motives which may be attributed to them, none has the semblance of probability, but *their own conviction of the truth and importance of their message.*

This view of their motive is strengthened by considering their number. As twelve weak-minded men, the dupes of imposition themselves, could not have borne so united, so unvaried, so consistent, so successful a testimony; neither could twelve deceivers, who had conspired together to cheat the world, when

suffering disgrace, enduring poverty, and entertaining the certain prospect of death, have continued to conceal the secret. On the contrary supposition, we ask for any thing parallel to it; any thing which bears a resemblance to it in the whole history of human weakness, or of human villany. When these apostles went forth to bear their testimony, they met with the most determined persecution; they were not supported, but opposed by men in power; they were summoned before tribunals the most severe and terrific; they were examined separately; but they never contradicted themselves, nor each other. Punishments and tortures were tried; and though they knew that a disclosure would almost certainly be the occasion of exchanging their degradation for dignity and their poverty for wealth, not one of them revealed the existence of a conspiracy. They were "killed all the day long, and counted as sheep for the slaughter;" but they endured extreme anguish with a triumph which surprised and confounded, while it exasperated, their tormentors. The only one who escaped a cruel death, was a man who was banished to a distant island. There he revolved alone, the transactions of his past life; was removed from publicity, and from the influence of his former companions; but he continued to derive consolation from the past, and joy in the anticipation of the future:—nay, exemplifying such patience, such purity, such benevolence, and such joy, as left at an immeasurable distance, those sages of philosophy, whose names are emblazoned on the page of history; and whose characters are proudly and triumphantly exhibited by infidelity, as models of human excellence. Against all these marks of sincerity meeting in twelve impostors, I will oppose

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Hume's favourite argument against miracles; and say, it is contrary to the testimony of experience. If it be even supposable that they were impostors, there is a new page turned over in the history of human nature. Here is a single insulated case at perfect variance, not only with our own experience, but with the experience of all men, in all places, and in all ages. We ask the infidel philosopher to account for it;—we ask it especially of those who deny the probability of miracles, and assert the impossibility of any evidence being adduced sufficient to attest them, and their contrarieties to our experience; and till they can give a satisfactory account of this phenomenon, we must believe in the integrity of the apostles.

Nor will it be difficult to establish their *correct information*. Did they really believe their Master to have risen from the dead?—Their belief was founded on the most indubitable evidence;—they did not credit it on the report of others;—they saw the Lord;—they had the highest demonstration which the case would admit;—it was the demonstration of their own senses; and this not merely once or twice; “he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.” Nor could this be any delusion of the imagination—any shadowy vision; to remove the possibility of such a supposition, he not only *appeared* to them, but he *ate* with them. He not only appeared, and spake, and ate, but he submitted to be “handled.” To establish the reality and the materiality of his body; to remove the possibility of a doubt, and drive scepticism from its last refuge, he satisfied Thomas, and said, “Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands;

and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing.” Nor was he seen by the apostles only, but proof was accumulated upon proof, and the series of evidence, gaining fresh force as it advanced, is thus stated by Paul; “he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that he was seen of above *five hundred* brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.” But in the case of the apostles only, surely they were *competent* judges: they knew the person with whom they had been in the habit, for several years, of converse the most familiar; who came back from the tomb also with the marks of the wounds which many of them saw, and all of them knew to have been inflicted upon him; nor would it have been possible for the most consummate art to have imposed upon them. And in reading the fair narrative which they have left, we perceive that it was evidence, and evidence alone, to which they yielded. The resurrection of Christ was an event of which they had no expectation. He had often intimated it to them, but his sayings were not understood by them; they were full of those ideas common to the whole Jewish nation, respecting a temporal kingdom, and never thought of the Messiah dying, and rising again, and establishing a spiritual empire upon earth. When he was seized, and put to death, all their expectations were disappointed, and their hopes died with him. They walked towards Emmanus, and were sad; and said to the mysterious stranger who joined them, “we trusted it had been he who should have redeemed Israel.” Indeed, nothing but the extraordinary benevolence of his character could have rendered such an event to them desirable. They fled from him when he was seized,

nor returned to him in the midst of his agonies; the boldest of them denied him in his extremity, and added oaths and curses to his asseveration,—“I know not the man.” Under such circumstances, and with the conviction of such ingratitude and guilt, their minds were ill prepared for desiring his return; for was it not probable that he would execute on them the punishment which they had imprecated on others,—“Wilt thou that we command fire from heaven, and consume them?” But whether or not it was desired, it is incontestibly evident, that it was *not expected*. When it was first intimated by the women who had been at the sepulchre, “their words seemed as idle tales.” But reported led to investigation; evidence followed evidence; at length demonstration silenced every objection, and they yielded to that unanswerable proof, which their incredulity could not resist.

I might notice the success of their preaching *on the very spot* where the event took place, and where, had it not been true, it was impossible they should obtain any credit. I might exhibit the proof arising from the miracles they wrought; these, among the external evidences of Christianity, must be considered as the chief cause of their success:—miracles which carried full conviction to the minds of multitudes who saw them; and are come down to us, perhaps better authenticated than any other historical facts. In connexion with miracles, we must not forget the proof which arises from *prophecy*; not only the prophecies of the Old Testament, but those of Christ himself. The resurrection of the Messiah had been a prediction of his own; and there is another eminent prophecy to be taken in connexion with it, the fulfilment of which is sufficient to remove all scepticism with regard to the accomplish-

ment of the other. “For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side; and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee, and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.” This was literally fulfilled. Their temple was razed to its very foundation; their city was destroyed. The people who murdered the Messiah, were scattered as fugitives and vagabonds over the face of the earth; and in their present hardened and impenitent state, their circumstances, their very countenances, proclaim their crime; and with an emphasis, which only such a condition can impart, they meet you in every city, in every town, in every village, in every street, saying,—“We killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the dead, whereof we all are witnesses.”

But why do we attach so much importance to the resurrection of Christ? How is it that the laying aside the grave clothes in the sepulchre,—that the re-appearance of that extraordinary being, to the persons with whom he had conversed,—an event which occurred nearly two thousand years ago,—should be calculated to interest every feeling of our hearts? Because, in addition to the proof of our acquittal as sinners, it is the pledge of our hopes as believers. “For if Christ be not risen, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.” Nor do we anticipate

our own resurrection only. "For the hour is coming, in the which *all* that are in the grave shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

But while the resurrection of Christ is one great proof of ours, and in establishing the doctrine which we are now to consider, we must perpetually refer to it, let it be recollected, that we do not adduce it in support of a sentiment, which is in itself incredible, or, of an expectation, which is naturally impossible. "Why should it seem incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" I am not now adducing proof;—but I remark, that our expectation is, by no means, at variance with the analogy of nature. In the vegetable world, God carries on a mysterious process of re-animation. It is seen in the ground, which is every spring, after the sleep or the death of the winter, quickened into life. It is seen in the blade, in the ear, in the full corn in the ear. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." "That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die; and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body which shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain; but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body."

We trace some animals through different stages of their existence; a worm crawling on the ground—falling into a state of insensibility—awaking from torpor—awaking with faculties never possessed before, and allied to an order of beings, to which, previously, it bore no resemblance. Why should it seem in-

credible that God should raise the dead? Indeed, when revelation has made the discovery, it becomes an object of the most rational and delightful contemplation. The existence of spirit, in a separate state, is, independently of any divine discovery, at least highly probable; and why incredible, that a spirit, at first formed in an embodied state, and from which, perhaps, we may conclude, that this state is most suitable to it, should be embodied again? Why incredible, that it should be again united to a vehicle, in connexion with which it has been accustomed to act; only that vehicle so refined, as to suit that new and more exalted condition to which the spirit is advanced? The truth is, that nature presents so many astonishing phenomena, and many of them bear such a close resemblance to the subjects of revelation, that his folly is not less than his presumption, who ridicules the expectations of faith, on account of any supposed difficulties, with which the accomplishment of them may be connected.

But the doctrine of the resurrection is a subject of pure revelation; and though, by the resurrection of Christ, established on a foundation which sophistry can never shake; it will not be uninteresting to collect together the various disclosures which were made of it, previously to its confirmation by the resurrection of Christ. [*This will form the subject of the next paper.*]

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*To the Editors.*

I SEND you a transcript of an original paper, which I have reasons for considering the only one extant.

As an authentic record connected with the history of Dissen-



ters, and probably the only memorial of the event to which it relates; as marking the spirit of the seventeenth century, even after the liberal policy of William the Third had disarmed persecution of its fangs; as leading us to thankfulness, that we are not fallen on such evil times, when a man could be represented so heinous an offender for a word; and, as an instance of the value of that safeguard to our personal liberties, the trial by jury, it appears to me, deserving of a permanent form. And I know not how this can be so appropriately secured, as by insertion in your valuable and promising miscellany.

Its appearance therefore, in an early number, will afford gratification to CANTAB. &c.

"The case of *Mr. Joseph Hussey, of Cambridge*, represented: which was no more than a suspected depraving of the Book of *Common Prayer*;\* in part of the application of a sermon on John i. 13.; laid open in the cause of faith in the doctrine of conversion against free-will, July 31; 1698. For which he was indicted at the assizes, holden at *Cambridge Castle*, August 4, 1698; and tried at the next assizes holden there, March 16. The trial came not on till Monday morning, March 20. And after a long and full hearing on both sides, he was, by the jury, honourably acquitted. Being an account of the matter faithfully transcribed out of Anthony Nutt, who took the sermon (being a constant writer) in short hand, and is here presented to the world."

"The last use of the point shall be of *reprehension*, to lay open

\* Perhaps the reader will think the indictment ought to have run, — for a suspected depraving of those clergy, who maintain the doctrine of free will, in opposition to the *Common Prayer*.  
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the absurdity of those men, who stand up to maintain free-will."

"To shew the absurdity of such a sort, give me leave to fetch two arguments out of the *Common Prayer*; for the matter of the *Common Prayer* is good, and the men who compiled it, were men of great eminency, many of whom did suffer martyrdom in *Queen Mary's days*."

"However, I am persuaded, if these men were now to awake out of their ashes, and come among ourselves, they would be ashamed of a generation of men, who have made no *further progress* in the reformation, than just where they had left it."

"But as to these holy and godly men, they, having the spirit of God breathing in their souls, did feel and experience that they were in bondage to sin and corruption; and were therefore made to breathe out this petition:"

"Arg. 1. 'O God, whose nature and property is ever to have mercy and forgive, receive our humble petition, and though we be tied and bound with the chain of our sins, yet let the pitifulness of thy great mercy loosen us,' &c."

"That there was believed to be no such thing as the freedom of the will to good works too, in a spiritual sense, is clear by this collect: For 1. Men bound in chains, cannot act as men set at liberty. 2. Inasmuch as they betook themselves to the *pityfulness of God's mercy* to loosen them, it is plain, they saw they could not help themselves out of this condition."

"But compare this with the principles of the men, who use this in the present generation. How absurd, yet common a thing is it now a days, to contradict from the pulpit, and in men's lives, what hath been acknowledged in the desk? Thus constantly using the same prayers, and yet entertaining a direct contrary per-

suation of the thing! This is too customary, and almost universal, in the age we live. Is it not absurd for persons, when they are speaking to God, to say, they are *tied and bound* in chains; and yet when they are speaking to men, labour to make them believe they have power, ability, and liberty, in themselves, to please God if they will?"

"Arg. 2. Again, Those godly men, who compiled this *form of prayer*, were made sensible of their own inability to please God, without the *healthful spirit of his grace*. Whereupon we do likewise find them praying for the *spirit* to descend upon all sorts, from the highest officer in the church, to the lowest member, and the most illiterate persons, in these words: '*Almighty and everlasting God, who alone workest great marvels, send down upon our bishops and curates, and all congregations committed to their charge, the healthful spirit of thy grace; and that they may continually please thee, pour upon them the continual dew of thy blessing,*' &c.

"But (dreadful to be spoken!) there is in this generation a company of men who call themselves of the church, but are so far from this principle of grace in the Book of *Common Prayer*, that they scoff and jeer both at the *Spirit*, and his *work*! Reproaching those who are taught by the *Spirit*, and led by the *Spirit*, and pray in the *Holy Ghost*; and notwithstanding they pretend to pray for the *dews of his blessing*, call it *canting*!"

"I wish there was more of that spirit of God, breathing in the souls of men now; I say, of the same spirit which breathed in the souls of those men, who made the *Common Prayer*. And indeed, considering the *inconsistency* of men's principles, with their gross *hypocrisies in practice*, I fear that at the great day, when the books are opened, this *Book of Common*

*Prayer*, when it is opened, will come in as a swift witness against them: and if so, I fear it will be found, that that book they now so much *rely* on, may be a means of sending more of them to hell, than the gospel converts in England."

#### ON THE MISUSE OF REASON IN RELIGION.

ASSUMING the inspiration and authority of the sacred volume, it becomes an interesting inquiry, to what cause are we to ascribe the endless diversity, and irreconcilable hostility, of human opinions, upon the *matter* of revelation? If revelation is light, pure, and heavenly light, what is that thick cloud, through which it seems to fall upon some minds so obscured and enfeebled? Is reason, that strictest medium of knowledge, liable to any influence, which, acting like the density of an atmosphere, may bend or twist the rays of heavenly truth in their passage to the understanding? Perhaps the general reply from men of all parties, would be, yes: the misuse of reason is the cloud,—the dense medium which obscures and perverts divine truth.—But in what cases reason is misused, seems to be an inquiry which is not yet decided. It is, however, one of so much moment, and is so closely connected with the propagation of divine truth, that a few remarks may not prove unacceptable to the readers of the "*Congregational Magazine*," nor out of place in the "*Christian Instructor*."

The acknowledged importance of revealed truths, or their intimate connexion with the happiness of man, and the glory of their author, precludes the possibility of believing that the Divine Being has left those doctrines in terms so equivocal, in propositions so obscure, as *necessarity* to engender the most oppo-

site opinions, and thus to become rather a subject of contention than a bond of peace. This would be to change at once, the whole element of revealed truth, into a noxious or deluding vapour, calculated either to destroy or bewilder mankind. The pure fountain of living water would then more properly be designated, the "waters of strife;" and the "Prince of Peace" would become the minister of confusion, and of every evil work. The opinions entertained by different parties, relative to the person of Christ,—the medium of a sinner's acceptance,—and the nature of conversion, admit of no reconciliation. They cannot be reduced to a common origin. They do not result from any subtle distinction, nor depend on any metaphysical refinement, similar to some other diversities of human opinion, by the consideration or admission of which, they might be explained, or be brought to accord; or be set down as views of the same thing, under different aspects, or at different stages. There is a revolting and resolute hostility among some of their opinions, that leads us at once to infer, that truth cannot possibly reside at points so remote, nor innocence be ascribed to both those series of operations, by which different minds, with the same facilities, and upon the same premises, have arrived at conclusions so utterly repugnant. There must be a defect somewhere. It is not in the nature of the terms by which THE TRUTH is enumerated; it is not in the mental disparity of the inquirers; it is not in the instruments afforded to each for conducting his investigation. The cause seems to be the *misuse of reason*: the judgment of man employed in determining what *is*, by its pre-judgment of what *should be*, the matter of revelation: the mind approaching to receive the

dictates of God, upon subjects on which it has already formed its limits, and its rules. That passion for system or theory, which is common to man, and which is perhaps one of the most refined and subtle sources of intellectual pleasures, will even here hanker after its wonted gratification. It seizes on a subject that will not, from its very nature, admit of human system.

To render revelation perfectly compatible with the dictates of what is falsely called reason and philosophy, it must be despoiled of its glory; the full orb of truth must be shorn of its beams; and our submission to its guidance, must be grounded, not on an implicit faith in its author, but upon the degree of approbation it can compel from the human understanding. Hence the misuse of reason in those ill-advised attempts to reduce Christianity to a system, and to apply to the investigation of its tenets, the principles of secular philosophy, for which different ages have been remarkable, and from which the present is not exempt. I am now speaking of the application of either the theoretic, or the inductive mode to the DICTATES, not to the EVIDENCES of Christianity. In the evidences of the inspiration of the sacred volume, we do not deny, that the Baconian method may be, and has been, in skilful hands, eminently successful; beyond the proof it may afford of the authority of the volume, it has nothing to offer; till we unfold the sacred pages, we may follow the guidance of the modern philosophy; but when once we open our ears to the dictates of the volume itself, we must no longer ask the instruction of another teacher; we have confessed the authority of revelation, and it were treason against the highest and sublimest rights of the Deity, to denuy to his decisions; or re-

fuse the clearest and most cordial credence of his word;—as his pure word, and not as his word illuminated, and made easy by the reason of man. Thus, often certain parts of Christianity have struck the inquirer as rugged and irreconcilable with the general principles of his theory; and he has found it no difficult task to persuade himself, that the removal of such parts would be an improvement, yea, that they actually cannot consist as parts of his system, and consequently must not be found in revelation.

Let the professed advocates of the gospel soften down the severity of truth; let them extract what they may imagine useless and unnecessary appendages; let them try to mellow this light, by exhibiting it reflected from the mirror of secular reasoning; or, to change the image, let them draw off the pure element as it springs up in the fountain of revelation, into the reservoirs of human systems, to be served out as they may think more orderly and providently, and it may be confidently affirmed, that it will lose many of its essential qualities, and cease to deserve the appellation of the "water of life." Its reception, under such circumstances, we hardly know how to consider a subject of congratulation. To the individual who thus receives it, no important good can result. He beholds Christianity, like an object seen through a series of gradually diminishing mediums, in the mere twilight of secular philosophy, and the insignificance of something perhaps very chaste, but by no means impressing him with the conviction, that the possession of it is essential either to his virtue, or his happiness. From such a process of refining and reduction, Christianity issues in mere imbecility and insignificance. It is no longer "the only way of salvation;" "the bread of life;"

for these terms imply the ruin and the dependence of mankind; it is only an elucidation, or a confirmation of a few truths, which the light of reason had left indistinct and undecided. Now this wicked annihilation of the soul and substance of Christianity, this smiling apostasy from its most essential doctrines, should be traced back to the point at which the sacred verities of the gospel were placed upon the rack, of what is often arrogantly denominated, "free inquiry," but which ought to be called the Procrustes' bed of an ambitious and proud philosophy. For here it is the truths of revelation are often reduced to a tame systematic arrangement, scrupulously adapted to the prejudices of the world, and the conjectures of philosophy. This may have been counted, becoming all things to all men, or a display of the wisdom of the serpent, but it has often been the wisdom of "the old serpent," without any of the "harmlessness of the dove."

It must be evident to every close observer of the spirit of genuine Christianity, that, throughout the gradual development of the whole scheme, as well as in its distinct application to each individual case, there was no court paid to human reason, and no sacrifice made to its claims. The heart is pronounced deceitful and depraved; and its decisions, in matters of a moral and spiritual nature, are clearly set aside in language the most absolute and severe. A disregard of the state of the heart, may be viewed, therefore, as another cause which has led to the misconstruction and perversion of scriptural doctrine. Nor is it unimportant to notice here, how completely the disclosures of revelation, both in explicit terms, and from their very nature, "disdain the judgment of that heart,"

which is pronounced to be at once interested, prejudiced, and corrupted. Shall it then be deemed strange, if those doctrines, so completely independent and divine in their origin, should, in many of their bearings, refuse the measurement of the human line and rule, or despise the narrow trammels of philosophical arrangement and dependence? It is not wonderful; and especially so, when many of the *works* of God, in their most sublime and interesting phenomena, refuse to unveil their mysteries to philosophic eyes, or to regulate their varieties by the artificial classifications of the naturalist. As the repulsiveness of the doctrines of Christianity to the human heart, is a matter of not unfrequent discussion in the sacred volume itself, and as this was an anticipated and predicted impediment to its reception, in no degree attempted to be mollified, can we, more wise than God, more tender of human infirmities, more anxious for the success of the gospel than its great author, resort to any qualifying constructions, or recommendatory expedients, without incurring either the sin of putting forth our hand to sustain the ark, or of taking from the words of the prophecy of THE BOOK? When we feel a sickly, feverish wish, that some of its hard sayings might be retracted, some of its mysteries solved, or some of its doctrines announced in terms more accordant with the principles of human wisdom, that the rational and elegant mind might not stumble at the very threshold, we then violate some of the fundamental principles of divine truth, forfeit the character of humble and implicit learners, and trench upon the prerogative of God. That the spirit here delineated, has existed, in numberless cases,

CONG. MAG. NO. 3.

there can be no room to doubt; and that this is the source of that insubordination of the human heart to the divine testimony, so painfully witnessed in many otherwise amiable men, is to me equally clear; and most, if not all, who have been close observers of the native tendency of their own minds, or of the process by which others have departed from the "faith, as it is in Jesus," will go with me another step, and infer, that this spirit, if indulged, will terminate either in Deism, or Socinianism, for they both lie in the same line of departure from the truth; and, as it is often found, at the distance of but a very few brief steps from each other.

But it may be said, that since reason and revelation are both emanations from the infinite and unchangeable mind of God, they must accord; no one part of his dispensation can contradict another; all he does must be harmonious; we are, therefore, justified in requiring the very perfection of wisdom and of reason, in a system of truth, claiming HIM for its immediate author. This is the essence of a thousand volumes, and is the sum of all the objections and arguments brought against that kind of remark here offered. The whole of the reasoning contained in it is defective in its basis. It proceeds upon a complete oversight, or rather a tacit denial, of one of the most momentous and prominent sentiments of revelation, as well as one of the most evident and important dictates of intellectual philosophy. I shall state the sentiment in the language of a popular journal:—"We have frequently to encounter a perverse incredulity, and a callous insensibility to evidence, when we attempt to convince any one of what is *contrary to his opinions*,

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wishes, or interests.”\* If this is true, then we may expect that human reason, judging of the matter, and not the evidence, will pronounce against the very first pretensions of revelation; then this extraordinary, this universal, this most potent principle of the corrupt heart of man, may be expected, when it cannot resist the evidence of the authority of revelation, to militate, in no very ceremonious warfare, against those parts of the system, which confound the opinions, and reverse the seeming interests of man.

It may fortify these remarks, and throw some light on the origin of erroneous principles, if we now proceed to review the true state of this very important question;—upon what terms, at its first promulgation, did Christianity stand with human reason; how did the heavenly visitant demean herself in the presence of this earthly goddess? And then we shall see upon what common principles, and to what extent, they may be expected to coalesce, in the present perfection and completeness of the christian system. If this point is satisfactorily adjusted, it may lead your readers to judge how far some systems have made a compromise for the sake of recommending revelation to the natural heart. We might begin with an examination of the actual references made in the sacred book to reason and worldly wisdom; and the result of such an investigation would leave but little room to doubt of the kind of reception the God of truth expected for his volume. There was little attention paid by the Saviour to the wise men of his day, as such; and wherever he refers to them, it is in terms by no means flat-

tering. He did not select any of them for his apostles. His first appearance among the doctors of the temple when a boy, and the manner in which he entered upon his public ministry, uneducated in their schools, and unknown to their doctors, were not circumstances calculated to conciliate their esteem, or to prepare them for the reception of his doctrines. He made no effort to render his instructions palatable to the vitiated taste of the wise scribe, or subtle disputant; and hence those doctrines almost invariably produced discord to the ear, and disgust in the heart of such men. Though “the common people heard him gladly,” yet for the chief priests and scribes he had so many *hard sayings*, that they could not tolerate him; and every day’s experience furnished fresh ground for that humbling interrogative, which the apostle puts upon a review of the whole series of events included in the Saviour’s life;—“Where is the WISE? where is the SCRIBE? where is the DISPUTER of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?” 1 Cor. i. 20. But the Saviour’s address to the Father, in which he even thanks him for concealing the truth of his doctrine from the wise and prudent, and revealing it unto babes, is another pointed illustration of the subject in hand. The prophet Isaiah, in his third chapter, had foretold this obstinacy and perverseness of the chiefs of the people; and the Saviour himself has left us in no doubt as to the application of the prophecy.\* But did the gospel, when it flowed not directly from the lips of its divine author, assume a more inviting form, or did it divest itself of that repulsive aspect under which

\* Edinburgh Review, No. 48, Article, Joanna Southcott.

\* See Matt. xiii. 13.



it made its first entrance into Judea? Did it ingratiate itself with those in *other places*, who made reason the object of their assiduous cultivation, and philosophy the business of their days? By no means. The utter and cruel aversion it excited in the polished disciple of Gamaliel, can be estimated best by the efforts he made to overthrow it; and by the unabating, and pre-eminent ardour he displayed, after his conversion, to support and advance its claims.

The particular point here reviewed, viz. the innate repulsiveness of Christianity to the pride of the human heart, could not have failed, if this view of it be just, to attract the attention of that able and learned disputant. When the surprise of his first awakening had somewhat subsided, we find exactly what, on these premises, might have been anticipated. He looks upon the former state of his heart as a fair specimen of the condition of most of the wise men of this world; and hence he labours, in all his epistles, to set aside their objections, by showing the sublime superiority of revelation to the little sphere in which this reason had been accustomed to employ itself. While he admits their reason to judge the *evidences*, yet never to estimate the *matter* of revelation. He, therefore, places the sage and the savage, the Greek and the Jew, the Barbarian and the Scythian, the bond and the free, all on the same level; showing, that the ancient prejudices of the one, the learned and subtle disputations of the other, and the gross superstitions of the third, were alike incompatible with the genius of that religion, which admits no coalition with human inventions, and offers no truce to human prejudices. In fact, on two points, this able advocate of revealed truth

clearly shows, that the religion of Jesus brings to nought the wisdom of the wise. 1st.—By the the authoritative and undisputing manner in which it unfolds its doctrines: and, 2ndly,—By the displeasing and humbling nature of all its disclosures, baffling the powers, exceeding the conceptions, and utterly annihilating the glory, of man. Its very essence to the palate of depraved nature, according to Paul's representation, is wormwood and gall. His three first chapters of the first epistle to the Corinthians, powerfully sustain the position, and justify the principle here maintained. The whole strain from the 17th verse of the first chapter, is most humbling to the proud philosopher, and most degrading to the self-constituted authority of depraved and erring reason; a reason, which, unenlightened, and unsanctified, can be trusted, in its decisions, on no one point in which the religious duties or spiritual interests of men are involved. There is another view of this argument which seems to determine the sense of all those scriptures referred to: viz. that, as Christianity never courted the patronage, so it has generally excited the hatred and opposition of the philosophers in every age and country. This view of the subject might be illustrated at great length, both from scripture, and from succeeding history. The earliest, the latest, the firmest opposers of the Saviour's doctrine, were the wise men of the day. As far as they became acquainted with the principles of his religion, an unrelenting and unmodified resistance was the result. And yet, at that time, several of the most humiliating sentiments, which subsequently grew into the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, had appeared only obscurely, in typical or prophetic language.

It was reserved for the issue of the Saviour's personal career, the filling up of that outline of doctrines, which he had only sketched, to call forth into deadly activity, the whole venom of philosophic malice. It was after the crucifixion, that human pride vented itself in the most frantic ravings; then she unveiled at once the serpent's head, and distilled its deadly foam. Should it be objected here, that the Jews were neither a learned, nor a philosophic people; we admit it in part, yet reply, that there is good reason to believe, that the Jewish scholars were not far behind many of their Grecian and Roman neighbours. It is clear, that the Pharisees and Sadducees possessed considerable acumen, and that some of them were ranked with the teachers of Greece. Gamaliel was a celebrated master; and Paul his pupil, a strict Pharisee, had evidently studied both philosophy, and the learned languages: the place of his birth and early education, was the rival of the first Grecian and Roman schools. Strabo says of the inhabitants of Tarsus, that "they so studied philosophy, and the whole circle of the sciences, as to exceed Athens, Alexandria, and any other place, in which philosophy and letters were cultivated."

From the very commencement of the preaching of the apostles, as we find on their side one unbending, unmitigated tenor of elevated denunciation against the proud heart, and self sufficient spirit of human wisdom, so, on the side of that wisdom, we find an inveterate and entrenched hostility against the apostolic preaching, which would neither pamper nor flatter the bloated pride of human intellect. Let us mark how the apostles, scattered through the celebrated cities of the learned world, stated and defended their doctrines, and with what

sort of temper their discourses were received, by the most patient and philosophic inquirer of that, or of any other age. At Thessalonica, at Ephesus, and at Lystra and Derbe, at Corinth, and Antioch, and Athens, and Philippi, the reception was substantially the same; at least, among the same class of persons. The learned and the priests, the rulers and the philosophers, were generally the foremost, the longest, and the loudest in their revilings. Having then briefly shown upon what terms Christianity stood with reason, at its first promulgation, I shall leave the reader to infer, how little attention is now due to any objections, which that reason may suggest, against the doctrines of revelation, or in short, how completely it is out of place, when it claims a right to comprehend the whole bearings of revealed truths, or to perceive the remote and concealed conditions, upon which those truths depend;—or their entire relations to one another, and to the great system of the universe. The practical tendency of these remarks, is to impress that important scripture,—“The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” It is only by cherishing a right disposition, that we can come to the knowledge of divine truth, though it may be otherwise with purely natural truths. Hence the importance of that disposition, to the successful investigation of those “things which the angels desire to look into.”

REX.

#### ON THE PLACE WHICH GOOD WORKS OCCUPY IN THE CHRISTIAN SYSTEM.

OF all the questions that engage the attention of mankind, scarcely can one be imagined of greater

magnitude, and deeper interest, than that which relates to the nature and necessity of *good works*. To form just and scriptural opinions on this subject, is not only desirable, but essential, since a departure from the truth in this case, exposes to tremendous dangers on either hand. Much is to be apprehended from an improper reliance upon them, as if they were meritorious in the sight of God;—as if they could be a substitute for the sacrifice and obedience of the atoning Saviour;—or, as if they could, partially, or wholly, effectuate the salvation of the soul. But, on the other hand, there is at least, equal danger in treating them lightly, as if they were by no means essential to the christian character, or as if genuine religion could exist or flourish without them. The former of these, is the delusion of the SELF RIGHTEOUS moralist, who proudly rests on his supposed virtues, and the imaginary excellence of his character, for eternal life;—the other, is the no less fatal delusion of the *licentious zealot*, who “makes void the law of God through faith,” and who practically says,—“Let us continue in sin, that grace may abound.”

None can have formed an intimate and extensive acquaintance with the religious character of the age in which we live, (especially as far as relates to our own country,) without perceiving that these are the prevailing errors of the day; both of which are committing fearful ravages in the christian church, and therefore against which, it is the solemn duty of the watchmen, upon the walls of Zion, to lift up their voice like a trumpet, contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. Never indeed, was there a period in the history of Christianity, when these errors were unknown. The apostles themselves found it necessary,

at the very commencement of the christian dispensation, to enter their protest against them, as strong delusions of the father of lies. The most zealous champions of our holy religion have, in all succeeding ages, combated them with the weapons of revealed truth. Yet it is still manifest, that these delusions are fondly cherished by thousands, who bear the christian name; and are even propagated with zeal by many who sustain the sacred office. *Pelagianism* on the one hand, and *Antinomianism* on the other, are labouring to sap the foundations of our common faith, and to corrupt “the truth as it is in Jesus.” Our pulpits, both within and without the pale of the national establishment, resound with these anti-christian dogmas, which sometimes are openly proclaimed, but more frequently indirectly conveyed. These circumstances render it peculiarly necessary, that the nature of those works, which are good and acceptable in the sight of God, should be distinctly explained, their obligations enforced, and their due place assigned them, according to the tenor of the word of truth.

It is not the present design of the writer of this paper, to occupy the whole of this wide field, but merely to submit to the readers of this miscellany, a few remarks on that division of the subject, which the title of this essay has announced. If the christian system were compared to a sacred edifice, devised by the wisdom, and executed by the power of God, the question is, what part of this building do good works occupy? Are they, as some would tell us, the foundation and chief corner stone, on which the whole superstructure rests? or are they only, as others would represent, the external decorations, which may indeed increase the beauty and magnificence, but are not

essential to the stability and security of the fabric? or are they not rather essential correspondent parts, possessing indeed no intrinsic value, yet absolutely necessary to the completion of this spiritual building?

In answer to this important inquiry, it may be first remarked, that the Scriptures, so far from warranting the expectation of justification by works, or encouraging a hope of final salvation on the ground of personal obedience, pronounce every such confidence vain and delusive. It is true, they affirm, that every man will be judged according to his works; and that a glorious recompense of reward awaits the faithful and diligent servant,—while the wicked and slothful servant shall be cast into outer darkness;—but these scriptural statements by no means prove that those works of righteousness, which have been performed, are the *cause* of the acquittal, which will then be pronounced before an assembled world. Personal character will be the *rule* of judgment, but not the *ground* on which that judgment rests. While it is certain, that *without* holiness none can see the Lord, it is equally certain, that none will be admitted to this high privilege, *because* of their holiness. When a reference is made, by the sacred writers, to the method of justification, and ground of hope towards God, they all, with one accord, testify, that it is not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to the mercy of God, and through the merits of Jesus Christ alone, we are pardoned, and sanctified, and finally saved. If, indeed, it were not for this door of hope, which the gospel opens, the most upright character on earth must sit down in despair, exclaiming, "Wo is me, for I am undone." The prospect of death and eter-

nity must be appalling to the mind of the most eminent saint that ever breathed, if he lived under a covenant of works, and trusted to his fulfilment of the law, for his final acceptance and salvation.

Nor are we authorised to conclude from scripture, that the salvation of the soul is effected by the *combined influence of the merits of Christ, and personal good works*. A notion is entertained by many, though from what part of the sacred volume it is derived, none can conjecture, that human obedience, though imperfect, co-operating with the work of Christ, secures the blessing of eternal life. Redemption is made, if a term so familiar may be employed on so sacred a subject, a *joint-concern*, in which something is effected by the merit of good works, and the deficiency is made up by the obedience and sufferings of the Son of God; so that it is partly of grace, and partly by works. But it must be evident to every reflecting mind, that this opinion ill accords with the testimony of those holy men of old, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. They affirm, that "other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is, Jesus Christ;" that the crown of life, which the righteous shall receive in the last day, will be freely given them of God;—and that while death is the wages, or just desert of sin, eternal life is not either partly, or wholly, the reward of human obedience, but the free gift of God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

But while the inefficacy of good works, as a cause of justification, is asserted, and may be fully proved by express warrants from the inspired records, it is not to be concluded, that they are unimportant, and to be contemplated in no other light, than as *tests of character, and evidences, or exter-*

nal marks of sincerity. This is, it is true, one important use to which they may be applied. Those "works of faith, and labours of love," in which Christians are employed, are a much more decided test of character, and furnish more conclusive evidence of sincerity, than all the varieties of hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, conflict or repose, which are usually considered as the exercises of christian experience. Many there are who can expatiate with fluency on the spiritual conflicts they have sustained, or the religious raptures they have enjoyed, whose habitual worldly conformity, or sinful indulgence, but too clearly prove, that "the root of the matter is not in them." But never yet was there a *self-deceiver*, who brought forth abundantly the fruits of righteousness, —whose character habitually tended to adorn the gospel of Christ, —and whose well-ordered life and conversation reflected around him the radiance of evangelical holiness. These are genuine practical tests which cannot be mistaken, and therefore, by which we are instructed to judge both ourselves and others. "By their fruits," —said Jesus to his disciples, —"by their fruits, ye shall know them."

But this may be rather considered as an *indirect* use, to which the duties of Christianity may be applied, than their primary design. They are chiefly to be accounted *constituent* and *essential parts* of the christian character, inasmuch that none can be a Christian indeed, who is not "careful to maintain good works." If these be wanting, a vital, a radical, an essential part of Christianity is wanting: if they be negligently performed, the religion of the heart must be proportionably languid and declining. As well might we call an exquisitely carved statue, that sees not, hears

not, moves not, nor inhales the vital air, a man; as pronounce that man a Christian, whose profession exhibits indeed, the outward "form of godliness," but who "holds the truth in unrighteousness." A genuine disciple of Jesus Christ, according to the description given of him, in this sacred volume, is not one who cries, "Lord, Lord," while he refuses to obey the precepts of the gospel: but he is one who both "hears the word of God, and keeps it;" —one who "walks not after the flesh, but after the spirit;" —one who "denies ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and lives soberly, righteously, and godly, in the present evil world;" —one who is "not conformed to this world, but transformed in the renewing of his mind;" —and, in a word, one who is "fruitful in every good word, and work." Let none then say, that good works have nothing to do with our salvation; for, though they can neither purchase, nor procure it, they are, nevertheless, essential to the possession of it. They form both a pre-requisite, and a preparative for heaven, though they cannot constitute a title to the enjoyment of its felicities and glories. "Know ye not," says an inspired apostle, "that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God." "That which a man soweth, that shall he also reap; he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting."

If it be so, ought the ministers of the gospel to yield so far to the prevailing errors of the times, as to shrink from the most earnest and pressing exhortations to practical duties? What though there may be some fastidious and perverted hearers, who can scarcely endure the term "*good works*," and pronounce all who

inculcate them, as christian duties of sacred and imperious obligation, *legal* and *blind* guides; so long as they are found to occupy so prominent and important a place in the christian system, "necessity is laid upon them, yea, woe is unto them, if they preach not the gospel." Were they to neglect to urge and enforce

these moral precepts, through fear of this, or any other reproach, to which their fidelity may expose them, the blood of souls would, in the most awful sense, tinge their garments, and leave a lasting, and if the infinite mercy of God prevent not, a perpetual stain! M. S. S.

## REVIEW OF BOOKS.

*A Sermon, delivered in the Tron Church, Glasgow, on Wednesday, November 19, 1817, the day of the Funeral of Her Royal Highness the Princess Charlotte of Wales. By Thomas Chalmers, D.D. Minister of the Tron Church, Glasgow. Third edition, 1s. 6d. Longman and Co. London. Smith and Son, Glasgow.*

WE were somewhat disappointed as to the subject matter of this sermon. Our lamented and admired Princess is not the prominent figure in this piece. There are indeed passages in it of powerful interest, and deep emotion, naturally awakened by the sudden and immense bereavement we have suffered, and which the nation will not cease to deplore long after the external symbols of mourning have disappeared. But the preacher has availed himself of the occasion, chiefly to enforce on the minds of his numerous congregation, the necessity of an increase of CLERICAL instruction in the populous city of Glasgow, where it seems more churches are wanted. He evinces a fervor on this subject highly creditable to his feelings as a christian minister, though the reader, it is probable, will be apt to think that he ascribes far too much to instrumental means; and, above all, to legislative provisions, as to their influence on the moral habits and character of a people.

It is obvious, that the growing numbers of the various denominations of Dissenters, have excited "alarm" in one party, as well in Scotland, as in England; and the effect is, a consensaneous movement, in both countries, to erect new churches. Our sectarianism does not prevent our cordial wishes and fervent prayers for the success of efforts made to spread genuine religion within the pale of the establishment, on both sides the Tweed. While we differ from the mode, we are willing to applaud the principle; and we hail such exertions, in so far as they may contribute to the cause of our common Christianity.

Dr. Chalmers is attached to the Na-

tional Kirk, in which he has been educated, with all the warmth of hereditary affection. It is not simply the object of his preference, but of his passion. The sermon has fewer of the characteristic excellencies, and more of the faults of this distinguished preacher, than those with which he had previously favoured the public; but if it fails to produce such strong excitement, as some of his former discourses, the appendix to it, at least, is a delicious morsel, which will be exquisitely relished by all lovers of ecclesiastical establishments. Dr. Adam Smith, in his treatise on the wealth of nations, was for leaving religious instruction to the pure operation of demand and supply. The author before us combats this position, and maintains, that the people are better taught, and make better members of society, where the legislature has provided them with a "READY MADE APPARATUS" of religion, than where they are left to shift for themselves. He says;

"In point of fact, a much greater number of people do come to church, and do come within the application of christian influence, when the church and the preacher are provided for them, than if they had been left to build a meeting-house, and to maintain a preacher themselves. There is a far surer and more abundant supply of this wholesome influence, dealt out among the population under the former arrangement, than under the latter one; and it is this excess of moral and religious good, which forms the only argument for a national establishment, that I shall now insist upon. The experiment indeed has been tried with variations on a large scale, and with results which are very instructive."

In matters of natural philosophy, or of civil policy, it may be right to decide a question by experiment; but even in those things great caution is necessary. Dr. Chalmers is too good a philosopher, not to know that results are often specious, but delusive; and that new and frequent processes must be tried before we can arrive at certainty. The fact which one experiment seemed to establish, has been exploded by others. The diamond, the hardest body



known, was considered for ages as indestructible; but, at length, it was found, by repeated trials, to yield to heat of a certain intensity. To our unphilosophical minds, it does not appear clear, that so high and spiritual a subject as religion, deriving its authority immediately from God, is to be reduced to a question of experiment; especially as he himself has given us another rule, and refers us to the law and to the testimony. In such a matter, we may err in our experiments; it may be safer to adhere simply to that word which is infallible. This eminent writer argues for a religious establishment, on the ground of expediency and success. But we imagine that the *AUTHORITY* and *PRINCIPLE* of the thing is a previous question of vital and paramount importance. The point must be referred, not to experiment, the results of which are variable and uncertain, but to the lively oracles, according to the evidence and analogy of which, we are willing that "Dissenterism" should stand or fall. Before we examine the fact asserted in the above quotation, we must be permitted to ask,—is the word church ever used in the New Testament, with regard to christian societies, in a national and legislative sense? Or, according to the same authority, is the kingdom of Christ to ally itself with the powers of this world? And are men allowed to legislate in spiritual matters? Till this be proved, the finest and most successful experiments must be inconclusive, as to such a subject. We conceive that our Lord and his Apostles, if they had acted agreeably to the principle suggested in this appendix, would have appealed to the Jewish Sanhedrim, to Herod, and Caiaphas, and have sought legislative provision for the religion which they published, instead of declaring its perfect spirituality, and that it neither courted nor needed the aid of secular or ecclesiastical enactments. To determine the question by expediency—to look simply at results—were to regard success as the test of truth! A test, which the ministry of Jesus himself would not endure;—and before which Christianity, as yet so partial in its extent, must fall;—while the "ready made apparatus" of so many national establishments in which religion has been tried; have afforded, it must be acknowledged, "very instructive results."

Let us now consider the fact. There is always a danger in drawing general conclusions from particular facts; no mode of reasoning is more suspicious, as it is so easy to oppose fact to fact. We can assure Dr. Chalmers, that on

CONG. MAG. No. 3.

this side the Tweed, it is not true, "that more people do come to CHURCH when the church and preacher are provided for them by the legislature, than when left to find provision for themselves;" and though the ritual of the church—its liturgy and prayers are all "ready made," even to a letter—with sermons "ready made" too; yet, with these high advantages, and with the attractions of music and painting to boot, this ecclesiastical apparatus fails of effect, the sculptured temple is not half filled, and the sweet sounds of church-bells, of which this ardent and imaginative writer speaks with poetical enthusiasm, are lost on the tasteless and unsentimental multitude. The machinery, though fitted up at so much expense, does not work well. The pasture afforded by the canonical shepherds, is often found not to suit the wants, or to appease the hunger of the flock; and the sheep stray in numbers from the established fold into other fields, and seek supplies in other grasses.

As it were absurd to talk of the toleration of thought, for who can prevent human beings from thinking? so it were hardly less so to suppose, that legislative enactments can shape the minds, or regulate the tastes of the people. As religion regards the conscience, men must, and *will*, choose for themselves. They *will* select teachers for themselves. On the other hand, the very circumstance of their spiritual provision being ready prepared for them by authority, independently of their own choice, (not to say imposed on them,) is not very likely to quicken their appetite, or to give zest to the viands set before them. From principles inherent in human nature, the "appetite for religious instruction" will be exceedingly various; and as people think they understand their own wants best, they take the liberty of judging for themselves of "the wholesome influence dealt out to them," and seldom feed with so much relish as when they are their own caterers. With due deference to our author, we are bold to affirm, that where the people have been left to build a meeting-house, and maintain a preacher themselves, they have acted with an energy, affection, and zeal, which an establishment could not create, and that the quantity, not only of actual ministration, but of attendance, has greatly increased.

Dr. Chalmers says,

"The appetite for religious instruction is neither so strong, nor so universal, as to secure an effective demand for it. Had the people been left in this matter to themselves, there would, in point of fact, have been large tracts of country without a place of worship, and without a minister."

Has not this been the case in a much

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greater degree, where the matter has been left to the civil power? The tendency of establishments has never been to excite a spirit of inquiry in the people, but rather to retain them in acquiescent tranquillity. The appetite for religious instruction cannot be produced by law,—it cannot be *established*. It may be excited by the awakening energy of an enlightened and zealous ministry that knows no stimulus, and feels no impulse, but love to souls;—and where this has been brought to bear on the population, the demand for instruction has been effective, and the supply of it has grown in proportion. Had not Whitfield, and others like him, broken through the trammels of an establishment, what an extent of moral waste would have remained uncultivated! How much would the world have lost, and how incomparably less would there have been both of demand and supply, in regard to the important article of religious instruction! The communities that leave religion to the operation of this free and *unestablished* principle, that have no church rates, no benefices, no tithes, and look to government for nothing but simple protection in their peaceable and benevolent career, are precisely the people who are covering the vacant spaces of the land with their chapels, and supplying them with ministers; and on which side “the excess of moral and religious good” lies, we suppose it may not be difficult for an intelligent and impartial observer to determine.

Dr. Chalmers brings forward the instance of America, in illustration of his favourite position. He is not however, very positive.

“In the Southern, and we believe, in the Middle States of America, there is no general provision for the clergy. The population are left to find their own way to the supply of their own wants in this particular: and we have been credibly informed, that there are, at this moment, from 4 to 5 millions of the people of the United States, who are growing up without any regular administration of the word, or of its ordinances among them. In the Northern States, there is a legislative provision; and the difference in point of moral habit and character, between their population, and that of the other States, is all in favour of religious establishments.”

Let us examine the matter;—America owes all that it has of true religion, under God, to Dissenters; and it is a soil in which it has taken deep root, and flourished abundantly. We need not inform the reader, that the government of the United States has no national establishment of religion. Under its ægis, all denominations of Christians enjoy equal independence; this has excited nothing but a useful and invigorating rivalry, without any of that vexatious jealousy, which is always produced by the favouritism of government

patronage. The CONGREGATIONALISTS, who in general maintain the doctrines of the gospel in their purity, are the most numerous sect in America. According to Dr. Morse, a respectable American writer, quoted by Pinkerton, there are in Massachusetts, 277,600, members of this denomination. In New England alone, besides those which are scattered through the *Middle and Southern States*; there are not less than one thousand congregations of this class.

Next to the Congregationalists in number, are the PRESBYTERIANS, who abound most in the *Middle and Southern States*; and if religion has declined in those parts, the declension must be attributed, not to a want of general provision for the clergy, but to a gradual departure from the vital principles of Christianity;—a regard to which, no legislative enactments can secure. The Calvinistic Baptists are more numerous in Virginia, than in any other part of the United States. We learn from Mr. Aspland, a writer also quoted by Pinkerton, that the whole number of their churches in America, at the time he wrote, was about 900, and members about 66,000. He supposes, moreover, that there are at least, *three times* as many attend their meetings, as have joined their churches, which will make the whole number of that denomination in these States, 198,000, or a twenty-sixth part of the inhabitants. Of the Wesleyan Methodists, which have increased most, we believe, in the Middle States, there are in America, according to the minutes of the Conference for 1815, 211,665 in society. Mr. Benedict in his account of this body, states, that without including that class in Massachusetts and Connecticut, who belong to the denomination merely by certificates, we may reckon *seven* adherents to *one* communicant; upon which mode of calculation, the number of adherents will amount to 1,433,015, which added to the communicants, will make the sum total of *one* denomination in America, 1,638,760;—that is, more than one-fifth of the whole population of the United States.

We do not exactly comprehend what Dr. Chalmers means by legislative provision for the clergy in the Northern States. We venture to say, that if it exists, it must be not only singular, but novel. The moral habit and characters of the people of America, not excepting those of the Middle and Southern States, may challenge a comparison with that of the people of any country, where religion has been aided by the arm of government, and the facts we have advanced, lead us to a conclusion the most opposed to that for which this writer

contents. The experiment has indeed been made on a large scale, on the transatlantic continent, and the results are all in favour of the unlimited independence of religion. It is perfectly surprising to us, that any established trader in ecclesiastical articles, should ever take a voyage to America in search of them, in a land where they are held in no reputation, and where it has never been found necessary, or expedient, to cultivate them:—it is a losing speculation.

Dr. Chalmers attributes to the Kirk of Scotland, the existence and support of parochial schools, and the diffusion of religious education among the poor. We apprehend that these advantages may be more properly traced to the more popular form of church government in that country. At the time of the institution of these schools, if we are not mistaken, the inhabitants of each parish had the election of their own ministers; and it was subsequent to this event, that the right of patronage has been restored to the heritors,—a patronage which it is well known, has lamentably tended to secularize the clergy. The whole of history is in evidence, that it is not characteristic of establishments to educate the peasantry; and the parochial school-system of Scotland is an institution of her better days. To the beneficial effects of this system, we have borne our humble testimony in a preceding number.\* This praise cannot be awarded to the church of England, and she has afforded flagrant proof, among the many that history presents, that ecclesiastical establishments are not favourable to the diffusion of knowledge among the lower orders. We do not wish to recall invidious recollections, or uselessly to bring the sin of any party to remembrance; but it is impossible to forget, that the members of the established church were the most strenuous, if not the only opposers of the British system. They were the persons who sounded the tocsin of alarm, and would have it that to educate the children of the poor, was to endanger social order, and political subordination. Had not the cause been taken up and supported by the various denominations of Dissenters, this plan to which Dr. Chalmers justly ascribes such extensive good, must have been dropped, and the lower orders might have remained in their original condition of squalid ignorance, and abject demoralization. We will not express a suspicion of the motives which have subsequently excited the church to educate the children of the poor on Bell's system; but a host of facts will bear us out in the assertion, that eccle-

siastical establishments have generally acted on the principle, that the populace are rather to be *ruled*, than *enlightened*;—forgetting that the best way to govern them, is to imbue their minds with salutary principles.

It is curious to observe a writer so highly gifted, and so liberally-minded, expressing himself in a manner, as if the independence of religious opinion were favourable to the progress of error, and truth needed the support of an established system of doctrine. He says,

"We can never so forget the way in which many of the orthodox congregations of England have relapsed into Unitarianism, nor be so blind to the degree in which the infection of Arianism has spread itself over the north of Ireland, as to admit it as an infallible position, that popular patronage is the best way to raise a barrier against error of doctrine among the ministers of religion."

It must be acknowledged, that errors sometimes spring up among Dissenters,—but not often among those of the congregational order. Such instances have occurred most frequently in those societies, the government of which has approximated to presbyterianism,—in which the *many* have been over-ruled by the *few*. There is indeed no power that can prevent the rise of heresy, but such as would altogether crush the free exercise of human intellect, and put an end to all the operations of mind. No establishment (unless we must except that of the holy inquisition) has ever been able to provide against the intrusion of error, or to secure purity of character in its ministers. We may venture confidently to ask Dr. Chalmers, whether the regulations of his own Kirk have preserved its clergy from heretical infection? Or, whether different and opposing doctrines are not broached from its pulpits? As to the church of England, notwithstanding her articles, she has protected, under the act of uniformity, almost every error that can divide the judgments of men. Of her numerous sons, some maintain, and others abhor, the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. Socinus and Priestley, Swedenborg and Southcott, have found disciples and advocates among her officiating ministers! Birds of the most different feather, and most discordant notes, have made their nests in her branches. Even in the stalls of her cathedrals, we could find as many theological varieties, as of creatures clean and unclean in Noah's ark. The Dissenters have no legislative bond of unity, no enacted articles of agreement, yet among ministers of the same denomination, though officiating in different congregations, little or no discordancy of sentiment, on the great principles of the gospel, exists; and this is so well understood, that any one who enters their meeting-

\* For February. Article, Adult Schools.

houses, may know, before hand, the doctrines he is going to hear. Popular patronage, or in other words,—the people having the choice of their own instructors,—though not an infallible security against error, affords them at least the only effectual means of delivering themselves from the evil. The Dissenter can relieve themselves, and no minister among them would attempt to retain a pulpit, if he held opinions disavowed by the congregation. It is unfortunate for the argument we have quoted, that it proves too much. To how many opposing sects did the Reformation give rise? It destroyed uniformity, yet must that event be hailed as the first of blessings.

The concessions of Dr. Chalmers, are evidences of manly candour;—but they are of such weight as to confirm us in our dissentism. After a number of other ifs, &c. which we have not room to quote, he says,

“If the government of our country had not fallen into the monstrous impolicy of withdrawing the mind and talent of the clergy from their own peculiar objects, by the overwhelming accumulation of civil and secular duties, which they have laid upon them; and if in this respect they had not been imitated by all the municipalities of the land, who, if not resisted to the uttermost, would do, what in them lay, to accelerate that precious transformation, by which the ministers of religion must at length, in our larger towns, sink down into officers of police, or driving subsidaries to the mere arrangements of state and city regulations,” &c. &c.

Now these things of which this reverend and learned writer cannot speak without indignation, appear to us, as the monstrous, but legitimate offspring, produced by the unnatural union of church and state; and are among the many reasons, why we take the liberty of withdrawing from her communion, though we admire the talents, and venerate the virtues, which we sometimes witness in her ministers and members.

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An Essay on Benevolent Associations, for the Relief of the Poor: of which the substance was read to the Literary and Commercial Society of Glasgow. By Ralph Wardlaw. Duncan, Glasgow; Longman and Co. London. 8vo. pp. 67.

THE principles and writings of Malthus have generally received either unqualified approbation, or exaggerated censure. By one description of persons they have been viewed as containing all that is necessary for meliorating the miseries of man, and for accomplishing a great revolution in the condition of society. By another class they have been represented as unfeeling, unnatural, and impious; alike inconsistent with the procedure of providence, and with the declarations of revelation. We

are not disposed to adopt either of these estimates of the principles of this political economist. We have no doubt that many of his views of human society are highly important, and that the greater part of his reasonings are founded on facts that none of his opponents have ventured to deny. That he has spoken sometimes in an ungarded manner, and indicated rather a want of feeling, cannot easily be contradicted; and that the most rigid application of his principles would not be the means of eradicating either vice or poverty, but, on the contrary, be productive of no small portion of misery, we firmly believe. One of the most mischievous effects of the adoption of Malthus's system is to be found among a class of would-be philosophers and economists. Professing to believe, that every benevolent association for the relief of the poor, is calculated to act as a premium upon poverty, and likely to increase the evil rather than to diminish it; they sternly refuse their aid to all such institutions. They will assist in supporting an infirmary, or a lunatic asylum;—but will not give a farthing to feed the hungry, or to clothe the naked. This is a most admirable apology for hard-heartedness, and deafness to the claims of suffering humanity. The man who wishes to withhold more than is meet,—who loves himself better than his neighbour, has only to get a smattering of this philosophy, and he has an answer prepared to every demand that can come upon him.

To a Christian we should consider one argument sufficient to overthrow all these reasonings, and counteract the operation of all such selfish feelings. Every christian church, properly constituted, is, by Christ's appointment, a benevolent association for the relief of the poor. Funds are provided in the voluntary contributions of the members of the body, and a distinct class of officers are appointed for the due and merciful distribution of the alms of the faithful. This appointment of the Christian Lawgiver, we apprehend evinces much of wisdom and of mercy in it. It shows that such associations are lawful: that they will always be more or less necessary; and that, properly conducted, they are fitted to answer most important ends. Every argument against such institutions, therefore, must, to a certain extent at least, affect the propriety of the appointment of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We highly approve of this Essay by Mr. Wardlaw. He does all justice to Mr. Malthus; he goes with him as far as he can; he vindicates him from false charges, and injurious misrepresentations of his principles and designs; but

endeavours to show that the *innocently necessitous, the indigent*, have claim on our compassion both as men and as Christians. The following we consider a fine passage, and as argumentative as it is eloquent.

"Still, however, it is an obvious truth, that these poor labourers cannot controul the events of Providence:—they cannot command the rain to fall, or the sun to shine, at their pleasure:—they cannot arrest the arm of Omnipotence, when it is stretched out to afflict the nations, and say to the Sovereign Ruler, 'What dost Thou?' And even supposing, for the sake of argument, that those national distresses, from which, at any time, their personal and family exigencies have arisen, have been owing to the impolitic and ruinous measures of the government of their country; still, might we not turn the eye of compassion on the suffering artisans, and say, 'As for these sheep, what have they done?' The evil has not been of their operation:—they could not prevent it; they cannot remedy it.—When times of general embarrassment and affliction, then, &c., in the course of Providence, occur:—when the staff of bread is broken:—when the outlets of mercantile speculation and industry are blocked up:—when glutted markets, and the cessation of demand, produces depreciation in the value of all descriptions of manufacture:—when the wages of labour are proportionally reduced, and many hands are deprived of profitable employment:—when a low price of labour unites with a high price of provisions:—and when the working classes are necessarily involved in deep and accumulated distress:—in these circumstances, (and experience, alas! has taught us that they are not imaginary,) what can industry, and economy, and independence, do?—Suppose the virtues of activity and of saving, put upon their utmost stretch:—if the compensation of labour be so depressed, that all the bodily powers must be tasked and strained, and and nature must be exhausted by rising early and sitting late, to earn the miserable pittance of a shilling a day, on which a young and numerous family is to be fed, and clothed, and educated:—if corporeal toil is to be most fatiguing, and mental anxiety most distracting and wearing out, just at the very time when there exists an unavoidable want of that nourishment which is requisite to supply the waste of the animal frame, and to recruit and invigorate the enervated mind:—what can the poor man then make of his spirit of manly independence, and of active and honourable industry? The spirit of independence will not satisfy the cravings of a hungry family; and of what avail is the spirit of industry, unless it has some field of profitable exertion? These principles, it is true, must always render him respectable; and in such circumstances, respect may justly rise even to veneration:—but has not the poor man, on this very account, the more imperious claim on our compassion and sympathy, that he is reluctant to stoop from his independence, and anxious to push his way through, and to weather the storm? And shall the very grounds on which our pity is due, be made the reasons for withholding our relief?—Is there no possibility of our urging this principle of independence to an extreme?—of making it assume, for example, the form of a stubborn and unsubmitive pride?—or, of allowing a man, through the excess of its delicate operation, to do essential injury to the health and well-being of himself and his family, before he will bring himself to let his necessities be known, and appear in the mortifying capacity of a receiver of charity?—I paint no merely imaginary picture, when I set before you a poor labourer, himself famished to a walking spectre, gazing, in speechless agony, on the emaciated wife of his bosom, and on his wretched infant, drawing from the empty breast, with the piteous cries of dis-

appointed eagerness, the red blood, instead of the rich and wholesome nutriment of nature; while the imploring cries of his elder children for bread, when there is none to give, wring his heart with intolerable anguish. Is there, then, I repeat, no danger of pushing this principle, confessedly good in itself, to an unwarrantable and unmerciful extreme? Is there no danger of winding up the spring, till it is snapt asunder by a bursting heart?—While we admire and venerate the principle, that will suffer, and suffer much and long, before it will complain; yet surely some caution and delicacy should be observed, in subjecting it to experiment,—in trying how far it will go,—what degree of pressure it will bear:—unless we are willing to stand by, and to see fellow-creatures, under its overstrained exercise, sink into the grave, the victims of starvation and heart-break, rather than utter a complaint, or present an application for aid:—and to have the pleasing reflection on our consciences, of having been art and part in this description of honourable suicide." p. 20—43.

Mr. Wardlaw then shows that Mal-
thus himself approves of relief in such
circumstances; and that he must be a
monster, rather than a man, who could
withhold it. He next proceeds to
consider, "In what way are the indig-
ent to be relieved?" Admitting that
legal assessment has an unfavourable
tendency, he asks, are the necessitous
poor to be neglected entirely? If the
answer is—no; he next asks,—are they
to be left to the exclusive care of pri-
vate personal benevolence? He shows,
that were this the case, the consequences
would be,—that the great body of the
givers either would not have leisure,
or would not employ it to examine care-
fully into the circumstances and char-
acters of the receivers;—that the most
necessitous and deserving would be
neglected;—that it would frequently
happen, that the same case of distress
would be relieved by many; while other
cases would not be relieved at all;—and
that, in this way, idleness and profligacy
would very often attain the relief that
is due to industrious indigence, that
shrinks, with delicate reserve, from
public observation, and is "ashamed to
beg."

He then shows that all these disad-
vantages are prevented, and the oppo-
site advantages secured, by the plan of
benevolent associations; by which the
proper objects of charity are discrimi-
nated; the necessary aid duly ap-
portioned;—the bonds of the social com-
pact strengthened, by the rich and the
poor meeting together;—and the great
design of Providence, in the varied
distribution of good and evil, illustrated
and accomplished.

To those who entertain any doubts
respecting the propriety or importance
of benevolent societies, we beg leave to
recommend this pamphlet. If it
does not succeed in convincing them,
we are sure it will not displease them.
They cannot fail to be gratified with
the candour, the amiability, and good

sense of the writer. We would take the liberty to hint to *Christians*, who are actively engaged in promoting schemes of benevolence, which have the body for their object, the importance of embracing the opportunities which may be afforded them, of doing good for eternity. To make a poor man "rich in faith, and an heir of the kingdom of God," is conferring on him a more important boon, than any thing which human beneficence can bestow. It is that which will enable him to bear poverty with contentment, to endure sickness without repining, and to pass through the valley of the shadow of death not only without fear, but even with confidence and triumph.

Philanthropy. A Poem, with Miscellaneous Pieces. By Ingram Cobbin, M. A. Printed for James Black and Son, London, 1817. Price 9s.

As a medium of conveying instruction to the mind, or principles to the heart, we do not think that poetry is so well adapted as prose. Works of fiction and romance, by giving full powers to the exercise of imagination, seem to generate that warmth of conception, and that glow of feeling and expression, so indispensably necessary to all poetical productions. The interesting details of truth, and the great and important subjects of religion, allow not of that diversified range, or poetic licence, which poets in all ages have claimed and exercised. Had Milton in his ever to be admired poem of *Paradise Lost*, confined himself to the strict bounds of sacred truth, or had he not availed himself of that vast machinery of supernatural personages, interviews, and occurrences, with which his poem abounds, most of his fascinating and highly interesting passages, must have been suppressed, because irreconcilable with fact, or with reason.

The restrictions imposed upon poets, who treat upon subjects of a sacred nature, the bounds of truth and probability within which they are compelled to roam, are the reasons why so few have excelled upon subjects strictly religious and devotional. Our author laments, that serious and important subjects should be so much overlooked by men of great poetical genius; but we are persuaded, that though instruction may be frequently conveyed through the medium of poetry, yet that the generality of those who peruse and admire the offspring of the muses, are led on, more by the beauty, the sublimity, and the imagination, however wild, of the poet, than secured or influenced by the morals of the man, or the sentiments of the Christian.

Mr. Cobbin, in the poem before us,

has discovered a very laudable ambition to bring the most important subjects, and the most interesting truths, to the notice and regard of his readers, through the medium of the muses. Philanthropy presents to the imagination, an almost endless variety of subjects, and a field for contemplation that is nearly boundless. Our poet has accordingly slightly touched upon almost every incident, every character, and every institution, leading to, or connected with, this great subject. We have read this poem with considerable pleasure, and though we have observed some lines, which a slight attention might have rendered less *poetic*, yet there are many passages, which, for their beauty, sentiment, and moral tendency, will not fail to secure for this volume a cordial reception. The notes with which this volume is enriched, make up full one third of its bulk;—for this the author apologises, but we can assure him, that to us *greybeards*, it was far from being the least interesting part of the work. We shall present our readers with an extract, not because we think it more striking and beautiful than any other part of the work, but because it harmonises with our feelings for a dear departed youth, and is a fair specimen of the work before us.

"O from the rocks that face Hiernia's coast,
What shrieks are utter'd, 'the dear youth is lost!
Those shrieks are answer'd from the Mersey's shore,
Whose murm'ring surf replies, 'SPENCER'S ashore.'"

The gloom of eve dims the meridian day,
The wheels of commerce loiter on their way;
The canvas rests—the mourning flag's unfur'd,
As though some wreck had happened to the world.

A fatal wreck! an angel was sent down,
To teach, and warn, and woo, the busy town;
But in a moment all their hopes are riv'n,
He spreads his wings, and seeks his native heav'n.
The wondering crowds had seen his features shine
With radiant beams that seem'd almost divine;
And heard his eloquence with strange surprise,
As though 'twere Gabriel bending from the skies.
With richest truths his tender strains were fraught,

For love divine was mix'd with all he taught;
And as the manly accents from him flow'd,
His feeling heart with heav'nly fervour glow'd.
No trifle he, in language vainly nice,
Playing with truth as children play on ice;
Fearing the base on which he stood too thin
To bear a pressure that might plunge him in;
But, fervent, and affectionate, and bold,
He preach'd as God's ambassadors of old:
The Spirit which their language did inspire,
Had touch'd his fervid lips with living fire.
All ages press'd with ecstacy to hear
The youth that rous'd alternate hope or fear;
The big-tear trickled down the hardy face,
While he unveil'd the boundless stores of grace,
And urg'd the heedless sinner swift to see
To HIM, whose mercy sets the guilty free:
The youth in thousands to the temple sped,
And from the temple to the Saviour fled;
Taught to esteem the world as 'duag and dross,'
And seek the sweetest pleasures at the cross.
The aged Christian's cheek glow'd with delight,
Charm'd to behold the new and wondrous sight,
When, lo! the sun was set in awful night!

But heav'n's grand best his splendour shall restore,
 And he shall rise again, to set no more.
 Ah, happy spirit! let us not repine,
 The disappointment ours, the joy be thine;
 Thy projects were not secular and vain—
 'To live was Christ, to die eternal gain.'
 All mortal schemes must end with mortal breath,
 But thine immortal, scorn the touch of death:
 Lo, groups of rescued spirits crowd the skies,
 And as from earth's cold bosom they arise,
 Thy treasure is secure, and they the prize."

p. 50—52.

The work is correctly printed, upon a fine wove paper, and ornamented with three neat engravings.

A Sermon preached to the Distressed Seamen, on board the Abundance and Plover store ships, on Sunday, January 18, 1818. By the Rev. James Rudge, M.A. F. R. S. Wilson, Royal Exchange, London. Price 1s.

THE author of this sermon is a clergyman well known, and highly esteemed by a large portion of the religious public. He has frequently exerted himself, with unwearied diligence and exemplary zeal, to impart instruction and consolation to condemned criminals in the last hours of their miserable existence. He has stepped forward to aid the exertions of almost every religious institution which has been established in the eastern parts of London, within the last ten or twelve years: and those who know him best, will bear a willing testimony to the truth of his own statement, as well as to the unaffected candour and humility with which he has made it—"My conscience bears me witness, that I have never turned my ear from the complaint of any poor man, nor from relieving him to the utmost of my power; and in those instances in which I could not assist him to any extent with money, I have visited him in his distress, and comforted him with my blessing and prayers."

When a number of distressed sailors were sent on board two ships in the river, by the committee formed for their relief, this benevolent minister resolved to visit and preach to them; and he thus, we believe, truly states his feelings on the occasion:—"That sympathy which I have felt for others, I feel as keenly and sincerely for you. I identify myself with every pang, and compassionate every distress, to which a real British seaman is subject; and while I have a meal to command, such an one shall be gladly welcome."

It is with real grief that we proceed to complain of a sermon delivered by so benevolent a man, and on so interesting an occasion: but our duty to the author, to the public, and to ourselves, compels us to notice with honest disapprobation, not only its general want of evangelical truth, but some sentences which are di-

rectly opposed to the nature and design of the gospel. Mr. Rudge warmly congratulates his hearers on their former "valorous deeds, by which they conquered peace from the mightiest foes." He encourages them with the confident hope, that "their distress will be only temporary; that some favourable gale will arise, which will bring their vessel out of the storm and tempest by which it is now agitated." He warns them against the sins to which sailors are most addicted, and he ascribes much of their present misery and want to this cause. He speaks of the Lord Jesus as their "refuge in trouble;" and encourages them by the consideration of his miracles, to put their trust in him for deliverance. But this is the nearest approach which he can allow himself to make to "the hope set before us" in the gospel. The sermon contains no reference to the depravity of our nature, to the guilt of our character, or to the condemnation of our state before God: consequently, there is no reference to the work of Christ, in which his atoning sacrifice,—his perfect obedience unto death,—as the sole foundation of a sinner's hope is recognised or implied. Nor is this, we are sorry to say, "the head and front of his offending." Who can read without pain the following sentence?—"Be truly penitent; and the tears of contrition you shed, will, with the blood of Christ, wash out the stains and pollutions of sin." p. 24. What are we to understand by an exclamation which occurs in the same page? "Without the hope and anticipation of heaven, what is this world but an expressive word for wretchedness on this side of the grave;—for despair in the hour of sickness, and annihilation both of body and soul in the day of death!" Other equally unscriptural and offensive passages might be quoted; and the sermon, as a whole, is one which we can by no means recommend, either for the general purposes of religious instruction, or for the particular object which occasioned its delivery.

It is highly probable, that in a short time a BRITISH ARK* will be floating in some public part of the river, in which a large number of seamen may attend the ministry of the gospel, and the public worship of God twice every sabbath; and when this long desired object shall be accomplished, we cannot but hope that our brave, but mostly ignorant tars, may be addressed in a more plain and impressive style than that which Mr. Rudge has chosen; and upon more scriptural and fundamental points than those which occupied his attention.

* See our intelligence, page 166, in this number.

FOR THE CONGREGATIONAL MAGAZINE.

EPITOME OF MISSIONARY TRANSACTIONS.

List of Missionary Societies, with their Stations, Missionaries, &c.

ENGLAND.

S. P. G. I. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, instituted 1647.

The operations of this Society are chiefly in British America. They have properly but three or four Missionary Stations, with three Missionaries, one Catechist, and one Schoolmaster. The Expenditure annually in this service is about 1000l.—The resources of this Society are, for the most part, supplied by Government.

S. C. K. II. The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, instituted 1698.

This Society has five Missionary Stations, and eight Missionaries. Expenditure annually, about 1100l.

U. B. III. The United Brethren Society for Promoting the Gospel, instituted 1732.

Has 30 Settlements, and 153 Missionaries, including their wives. Annual Expenditure about 2000l.

M. M. S. IV. The Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, commenced 1770.

Has 23 Missionary Stations, exclusive of British America, and 81 Missionaries. Annual Expenditure about 10,000l.

B. M. V. The Baptist Missionary Society, instituted 1792.

Has 26 Stations, and 24 Missionaries. Annual Expenditure about 11,500l.

M. S. VI. The Missionary Society, instituted in London 1795.

Has 41 Stations, and 28 Missionaries. Annual Expenditure about 19,000l.

C. M. S. VII. The Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East, instituted 1801.

Has 20 Stations, and 27 Missionaries. The Society has lately adopted the Free Schools of the late Doctor John, at Tranquebar, amounting to 20 in number, with 28 teachers. Beside which, they have about 20 Catechists, Readers, and Teachers. Annual Expenditure about 20,000l.

VIII. The General Baptist Missionary Society, instituted 1816.

This Society has not yet been brought into effective operation.

SCOTLAND.

E. M. S. I. The Edinburgh Missionary Society, instituted 1796.

Has three Stations, and 20 Missionaries. Annual Expenditure about 2000l.

HOLLAND.

I. The Rotterdam Missionary Society 1799.

Something is expected to be done by this Society shortly for the Dutch Colonies.

DENMARK.

D. M. I. The Royal Danish Mission College, instituted 1706.

This Society established the first Protestant Mission in India, at Tranquebar; its resources being now much lessened, assistance has been afforded by other Societies. It has one Station, and three Missionaries.

NORTH AMERICA.

- I. The Episcopal Church Missionary Society in New York, instituted 1792.
- A. M. II. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, instituted at Philadelphia 1812.
- The A. M. have Two Stations, and employ Eight Missionaries.
- A. B. M. III. The General Missionary Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States of America for Foreign Missions, instituted at Philadelphia 1814.
- This Convention is under the direction of a Board, entitled, "The Baptist Board of Foreign Missions for the United States."
- The A. B. M. have One Station, and employ Four Missionaries.
- IV. The United Foreign Missionary Society, instituted at New York 1817.
- V. The Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church of North Carolina, instituted 1817.

MISSIONARY STATIONS.

EUROPE.

1. Malta and the Levant M. S.—C. M. S.

ASIA.

I. NORTH OF THE CASPIAN SEA.

1. Sarepta on the Volga U. B.
2. Karass an island on the mouth of the Volga } E. M. S.
3. Astrachan }
4. Orenburg

II. SIBERIA.

1. Irkutsk, (Mongul Tartars) M. S.

III. HINDOSTAN.

1. Trichinopoly S. C. K.
2. Tanjore S. C. K.
3. Tranquebar D. M.—S. C. K.—C. M. S.
4. Cuddalore S. C. K.
5. Vepery, near Madras S. C. K.
6. Madras M. S.—M. M. S.—C. M. S.
7. Bombay M. M. S.—A. M.
8. Dinagepore and Sadamah'l
9. Goamalty
10. Cutwa
11. Berhampore
12. Jessore
13. Serampore
14. Vans-Variya
15. Chittagong
16. Silhet
17. Digah B. M.
18. Sirdhana
19. Patna
20. Allahabad
21. Delhi
22. Gayah
23. Monghir
24. Balasore
25. Nagpore

26. Calcutta	B. M.—M. S.—C. M. S.
27. Agra	B. M.—C. M. S.
28. Surat	B. M.—M. S.
29. Vizagapatam	} M. S.
30. Ganjam	
31. Bellary	
32. Tinevelley Country	
33. Chinsurah	} C. M. S.
34. Chunar, near Benares	
35. Trayancore	
36. Meerut	

IV. BURMAN EMPIRE.

1. Rangoon	A. B. M.
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V. CHINA.

1. Canton	M. S.
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VI. MALACCA.

1. Malacca	M. S.
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VII. ASIATIC ISLANDS.

1. Ceylon —	} M. S.—M. M. S.—B. M.—C. M. S.
1. Columbo	
2. Matura	
3. Amlamgooddy	
4. Jaffnapatam	
5. Batticoloe	
6. Point de Galle	
2. Java —	} M. S.—B. M.
1. Batavia	
2. Samarang	
3. Amboyna	B. M.—M. S.

VIII. AUSTRALASIA.

1. New South Wales —	} C. M. S.—M. M. S.
Paramatta	
2. New Zealand	C. M. S.

IX. POLYNESIA.

1. Society Isles —	} M. S.
Otaheite	
Eimeo	

AFRICA.

I. SOUTH AFRICA.

1. Stellenbosch	} M. S.
2. Tulbagh Drosdy	
3. Boesjesveld	
4. Caledon	
5. Hooge Kraal	
6. Bethelsdorp	
7. Theopolis	
8. Caffraria	
9. Hephzibah (Bushmen)	
10. Griqua Town	
11. Bethesda	
12. Pella	
13. Bethany	
14. Peace Mountain (Africaner's Kraal)	
15. Lattakoo, Makoon's Kraal, and Melapeetze	

1818.]

Missionary Epitome.

163

16. Cape-Town	.....	M.S.—M.M.S.
17. Gnadenthal	.....	} U.B.
18. Gruenekloof	.....

II. WEST AFRICA—SIERRA LEONE.

1. Free-Town	C.M.S.—M.M.S.
2. Leicester-Mountain	} C.M.S.
3. Regent's-Town	.....
4. Gloucester-Town	.....
5. Kiskey-Town	.....
6. Canoffee	.....
7. Yongroo Poonoh	.....
8. Gambier	.....
9. Congo-Town	} S.P.G.
10. Cape-Coast	.....

III. AFRICAN ISLANDS.

1. Isle of France	} M.S.
2. Madagascar	

NORTH AMERICA.

I. GREENLAND.

1. New Hernhuth	} U.B.
2. Lichtenfels	.....
3. Lichtenau	.....

II. LABRADOR.

1. Nain	} U.B.
2. Okkak	.....
3. Hope-dale.	.....

III. NEWFOUNDLAND.—S. P. G.—M. M. S.

S. P. G. has here five Missionaries, and eight School-masters.
M. M. S. has seven Stations, and ten Missionaries.

IV. NOVA SCOTIA, NEW-BRUNSWICK, AND CANADA.

In British America, the inhabitants being mostly European, the Stations are called Missionary Stations, and the Ministers, Missionaries, rather from custom than propriety: though, in some parts, exertions are made for the conversion of the Heathen.

In Nova Scotia, the S. P. G. has sixteen Missionaries, nineteen School-masters, and five School-mistresses.

In New Brunswick, eight Missionaries, nine School-masters, and one School-mistress.

In Cape Breton, one Missionary.

In Upper Canada, nine Missionaries, one School-master, and one Catechist.

In Lower Canada, five Missionaries.

In British America, the M. M. S. has nineteen Stations, and twenty-five Missionaries.

1. Prince Edward's Island	.....	M.S.—M.M.S.
	Canada.	
2. Fairfield	.....	} U.B.
3. Goshen	.....

4. Quebec	M. M. S.—M. S.
5. Elizabeth-Town	M. S.
6. Kingston Mission to the Mohawk Indians	} S. P. G.
7. Niagara, ditto.	
8. Cherokee Indians	A. M.

SOUTH AMERICA.

COAST OF GUIANA.

1. Paramaribo	} U. B.
2. Sommelsdyk	
3. Good Intent	} M. M. S.
4. Demerara	
Le Resouvenir, George-Town	M. S.
5. Berbice	M. S.

WEST INDIES.

1. St. Thomas	} U. B.
New Hernhuth	
Niesky	
2. St. Croix	
Friedenstal	} U. B.
Friedensberg	
Friedensfield	
3. St. Jan	} U. B.
Emmans	
Bethany	
4. Jamaica—	} U. B.
Bogue—Mesopotamia	
Carmel—Pern	
Spanish-Town—Morant-Bay	
Bove Rock	
Kingston	M. M. S.
5. Antigua—	} U. B.
St. John's—Grace-hill—Grace-Bay	
English-Harbour	C. M. S.
6. Barbadoes	U. B.—M. M. S.
7. St. Kitt's	U. B.—M. M. S.
8. Nevis	} M. M. S.
9. St. Eustatius	
10. Tortola, and the Virgin Islands	} M. M. S.
11. Dominica	
12. St. Vincent's	} M. M. S.
13. Grenada	
14. Trinidad	M. M. S.—M. S.
15. St. Domingo	} M. M. S.
Port au Prince	
16. New Providence	
17. Eleuthera	
18. Harbour Island	
19. Abaco	} M. M. S.
20. Long Island	
21. Bermudas	

TOTAL.

Missionaries now employed, (Men,) about	380
Stations occupied, about	190
Annual Expenditure, about	75,000 <i>l</i>

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

ON BUILDING NEW CHURCHES AND CHAPELS.

To the Editors.

FROM the intimation given in the Prince Regent's speech, at the opening of parliament, it seems highly probable, that measures will soon be taken to augment the number of churches, chapels, and clergymen, throughout the kingdom. I can have no objection to the comfortable accommodation of those, that prefer the orders and discipline of the episcopal church: but as a dissenter from that church, I have serious and strong objections to being compelled to pay for their accommodation. The spirit of such a measure is wholly unchristian; and I should hope that the enlightened members of the establishment, will perceive its injustice, as well as its total hostility to that gospel, which disclaims alike all sorts of compulsion, in its support or propagation. If so, we may hope that episcopalians themselves will stand forward, to protect conscientious dissenters from the operation of any such measure. If dissenters want more chapels, they would never dream of applying for an act to make a rate upon Quakers, Episcopalian, and Jews, to assist in the work; if a law could be obtained for the purpose, there is not a dissenting congregation in the kingdom, that would take advantage of it.

Whatever want is felt by the establishment, it surely has within itself the means of supplying. The rich endowments,—vicarages,—rectories,—bishoprics, &c. &c. are ample enough to find more places, and more men, if they really are wanted: and it will be much more like an apostolical act, to see a general and voluntary offer from the bishops, deans, rectors, &c. &c. to furnish from their own resources, both more places, and more preachers. Nothing would so much exalt the character of beneficed clergymen. At all events, I hope, that if any act should be brought forward, an exempting clause in favour of dissenters will be introduced, or the affair left entirely to the zeal of episcopalians, who surely are rich enough, in every parish, to find themselves a place of worship. A voluntary subscription will be far more honourable to the church, and far more grateful to the nation at large, than an act of parliament. The pressure of the poor-rates, and other parish-rates, is at present so great, that it is sustained in most parts of the country, with extreme difficulty. But if the

plan in contemplation, is to be carried into effect, a very great addition will be made to our parish taxes.

I hope dissenters will not be wanting to themselves, when the proposal is brought forward; and as they have seen more than once, how hastily any act that affects them, is attempted to be carried, let them be generally prepared to use every constitutional means of obtaining exemption from the operation of such a measure.

Congregational Board.

"The Committee appointed by the Board, to examine the Case and Trust Deeds of — Meeting House, reported, that they had examined the Case and Trust Deeds, and had found, that the following clause was inserted in the Deed of Trust."

"And upon further trust, to permit and suffer the members of the said chapel or meeting house, both men and women, or the major part of them, to elect, nominate, and appoint, the minister for the time being, who shall statedly officiate, and administer the ordinances of religion in the said meeting house, and make any contract with such minister, as to the duration of his connexion with the said congregation, as such minister and such members, or the major part of them, shall in their discretion think fit. And in case no such contract shall be made, then such minister to be considered as holding his office and situation, as minister of the said congregation, subject to be determined at any time by six months' notice in writing, under the hands of a majority of the said members, at a meeting duly assembled for that purpose, given to him, or left at his usual place of abode. Such minister to be of the independent persuasion, respecting church government, and to hold, profess, and embrace, *ex animo*, the truths contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith, in the plain, literal, and grammatical sense thereof. And no such minister shall be nominated, elected, and appointed, unless immediately before such nomination, election, and appointment, he shall declare, in the presence of the members of the said meeting house, or the major part of them, his sincere approbation of the Westminster Confession of Faith. And in case any minister so to be nominated, elected, and appointed, as aforesaid, shall teach, preach, or propagate, in or out of the said meeting house, any doctrine contrary to the doctrines contained in the

said Westminster Confession of Faith; or shall prove immoral in his life or conversation, or be negligent of, or inattentive to, his duty as a minister of the said meeting house:—That then, and in such case, and so often,—it shall and may be lawful to and for the said members of the said meeting house, or the major part of them, to deprive, remove, and expel, such minister from his office and situation, and in his place and stead to elect and appoint another person to be minister thereof, in manner aforesaid. Any thing herein before contained to the contrary notwithstanding.

“Resolved, That considering the clause now read, to be highly objectionable, and having already refused to sign cases, when clauses of the same nature have been found in the Deeds of Trust; the Board cannot hesitate to refuse its sanction to the case of ——— meeting house; or to declare, that it will in future withhold its sanction from any case, connected with similar provisions.

“Resolved, That the Secretary transmit copies of this resolution, and of the preceding minute, to the editors of the Evangelical and Congregational Magazines, with a request that they may be published in the next number of their respective miscellanies.”

MARK WILKS, Secretary.

Homerton Academy.

THE Annual General Meeting of this venerable and important institution, was held on Tuesday, February 10, at the King's Head, in the Poultry. This being the first General Meeting, since the distinction between members and subscribers has been done away, it was numerously and respectfully attended. The treasurer, Joseph Stonard, Esq. was called to the chair. A very interesting report of the managing committee, was read by the secretary; the report of the auditors having been also read, the Rev. Dr. Winter, in moving that the reports be received, congratulated the society on the obstacles being removed, which had prevented many friends to the institution from coming forward in its support; a measure which was accomplished without the slightest deviation from the important principles on which the society was at first established. The motion was seconded by the Rev. Henry Lacey, who bore an honourable testimony to the conduct of many ministers who had received their education at Homerton, particularly for their firm and decided opposition to those Antinomian errors, which, in some parts of the kingdom, had proved the bane of the churches.

THE Rev. Mr. Mudie, from Hoxton

Academy, lately settled at Hamburgh, as the minister of a congregation, consisting of members of the Church of England, of the Scotch Kirk, and of other respectable Christian societies. His ministry has been very acceptable and useful, and his congregation has so much increased, as to induce some of its principal members to apply to the Senate of that large and populous city, for a more commodious place of worship. The application was unexpectedly opposed by the English Consul, Mr. Mellish, who stated that the applicants were of a fanatical description of people, whose sentiments and proceedings were the cause of much mischief in their own country. Upon this, several gentlemen of the congregation, who are respectable English merchants, sent a statement of facts to Lord Castlereagh, who, highly to his honour, immediately issued an order for Mr. Mellish to withdraw his opposition, informing him that he was totally mistaken in the character of the people. All who know Mr. Mudie, and the respectable institution, in which he received his education, must be satisfied that he is very far removed from fanaticism; and is likely to be an instrument of much good in a city, which, with many hundred English inhabitants, does not contain another English minister.

A MEETING was held on Thursday, February 5, 1818, at the City of London Tavern, to take into consideration the project, to which we referred in our last number, of stationing a vessel in some parts of the River Thames, in which seamen, while in the port of London, may enjoy the advantages of religious instruction, and perform the duties of divine worship. Robert Humphry Marten, Esq. was called to the chair, who stated particularly, the obligations we were under, to convey the tidings of salvation to sailors, as well as others, and the numerous advantages that were likely to arise from the prompt adoption and the zealous prosecution of the proposed plan. George Green, Esq. of Blackwall, Captain Anderson, Mr. Scott, Master of His Majesty's Dock-yard at Deptford, and several other gentlemen, interested in maritime concerns, warmly advocated the important cause, and promised their aid towards accomplishing it. The Rev. Dr. Rippon, the Rev. Mr. Hyatt, and several other ministers, likewise addressed the meeting, in commendation and encouragement of the plan.

Since receiving the above, the following notice has been transmitted to us from the Secretaries.

Society for Promoting the Religious Instruction of British Seamen while in Harbour.

A General Meeting of this Society will be held at the City of London Tavern, Bishopsgate-street, on Wednesday, the 15th of March, 1818.

The chair to be taken at one o'clock precisely; when all persons desirous of promoting this important object, by providing for seamen a floating chapel, are respectfully invited to attend.

Suitable accommodations will be provided for those Ladies who may favour the Meeting with their attendance.

(By order of the Committee.)

N. E. SLOPER, } Provisional
T. THOMPSON, } Secretaries.

Independent Association in the English parts of Pembroke-shire.

In the autumn of 1815, a few Independent ministers; in those parts of the country, were led to think seriously of some measures that might tend to revive the interests of religion in their respective congregations. Their union with the Welsh was found to answer no valuable purpose to those who are accustomed to English preaching only; while some more regular plan, for the benefit of English churches, seemed to them very desirable. Having, therefore, assembled for the purpose of forming an Association for the English parts of Pembroke-shire, they adopted the best rules that could be thought of at the time; and, among other things, it was agreed;—that their meeting should be held at each other's places of worship in rotation, by seniority; that every member of the Association should preach in his turn, beginning with the youngest;—that the minister, at whose place each meeting may be held, should appoint the given subjects, as might appear to him most profitable for his own people; and that every thing relating to the order and services of the day, should be conducted entirely at his discretion.

After the example of other Associations in the vicinity, and at the suggestion of some Welsh brethren, a public conference is held between the morning and evening services. The minister of the place is president, or moderator, *ex officio*. After a few words on the occasion of assembling together, he requests one of his brethren to engage in prayer. He then proposes a question, previously agreed on, as most useful to the people; when the ministers rise to deliver their sentiments, one after another. When the first question has gone round, there is generally time for the discussion of another; and the opportunity is then concluded by prayer.

This means of imparting religious instruction, appears to possess peculiar advantages. Every speaker endeavours, in a few words, to throw new light on the subject; the question is thereby fully investigated; while the greatest attention and interest are visible in the audience.

The second anniversary of this Association was held at the Green Meeting, Haverfordwest, on the 24th of September, 1817. In the morning, the Rev. Mr. Press, of Heathfield, in Sussex, preached, "On the Importance of Truth;" and the Rev. Mr. Evans, of St. Florence, "On the Necessity of promoting the Cause of God in his own Way." In the evening, the Rev. Mr. Thomas, of Tease-cross, and Rhos-market, preached "On the Abrahamic Covenant;" and the Rev. Mr. Warlow, of Milford, "On the Ministry of John the Baptist." These subjects were dictated by circumstances of a local nature. To have a double lecture at each service, is the general custom in every part of Wales. There are, indeed, many instances, in which three sermons have been delivered at one service.

In plans of extensive usefulness, the members of this Association are unable to emulate their brethren in other parts of the kingdom; not being supported in the same manner, had they equal room for exertion. The divine presence has, however, crowned their meetings, refreshed their own minds, and commanded a blessing, which has been felt and acknowledged by some of their people.

JOHN BULMER, Secretary
of the Association.

The next half-yearly meeting of the Wiltshire Association, will be holden at Mr. Sibree's Meeting-house, Frome, on Tuesday in the Easter week; morning preacher, Mr. Berry, of Warminster; subject, The Fulfilment of Prophecy.

The business of the Association will be attended to at a public meeting in the afternoon, instead of a sermon as heretofore; when the ministers, members of churches, and others, are respectfully requested to favour the meeting with their attendance and co-operation.

DIED on Monday, the 16th instant, Joseph Flint, Esq. of Camberwell, after a few days' illness; the well-known friend of the poor, whom he was in the habit of visiting and relieving; and for whose instruction he had opened a chapel in his own house, where the gospel was regularly proclaimed by himself, or by ministers, whom he obtained for that purpose.

LITERARY NOTICES.

The Editors will feel obliged to Literary Gentlemen and Publishers, for the communication of Notices, (Post Paid,) suited to this Department of the LONDON CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTOR.

WORKS PREPARING FOR PUBLICATION.

A New Picture of Rome, or an interesting Itinerary, containing a general description of the Monuments and most distinguished Works in Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture, both Ancient and Modern, of that celebrated City, and its Environs. By Marten Vaal, Roman Antiquary of the Etruscan Academy of Cortona, &c. Embellished with numerous views of Public Buildings, and a large Plan of Rome.

The English and French, and French and English Cambist; or, Tables of Exchange, from one farthing to a million pounds sterling, and from one denier to a million livres. By John Henry Brohier, late Superintendent of the Toulouse Emigrants. To be comprised in one portable volume.

On the 1st of May, 1818, will be published, on Fine Paper, hot-pressed, price 1s. to be continued Monthly till completed, the first Number of an Ecclesiastical Biography, containing the Lives of Jesus and the Apostles, and of the most celebrated Fathers, Martyrs, Founders of Sects, Missionaries, and Theological Writers; arranged chronologically to form a connected History of the Christian Church.

Mrs. Annas Lamont, of Liverpool, intends publishing, by subscription, Poems and Tales in verse, in one volume, foolscap octavo.

A New Edition of Mr. Daniel Turner's Letters, Religious and Moral, addressed to a Young Gentleman in India, designed to inspire the Minds of Youth, with the love of Piety and Virtue, is printing, and will appear in the course of the Month.

The Rev. Joseph Kerby, of Lewes, is preparing for publication, a Poem, on the interesting History of Joseph, and his brethren. Published by subscription. Price 2s. 6d.

SELECT LIST OF WORKS RECENTLY PUBLISHED.

Just Published, a Sermon on the Importance of Correct Views in Religion. By the Rev. John

Ely, Minister of Providence Chapel, Rochdale. Price 1s.

This day is Published, Second Edition, price 1s. The Reformation from Popery, the work of God; a Sermon, preached at Bushey, Hert. By Thomas Gilbart, Minister of Bushey Chapel.

Lately Published, Remarks on a pamphlet, entitled, a Comparative View of the Scriptural Evidence of Unitarianism and Trinitarianism; unto which is added, a Glance at the Rev. R. H. Carne's Confutation of Sabellianism revived. By Nicholas Newcombe, a Rational (not an Athanasian) Trinitarian, at Oakhampton. Price 1s.

The Calvinistic Dissenter's Pleas, for disenting from what is called the Established Church. By Nicholas Newcombe. Price 6d.

An Appeal to the Inhabitants of Oakhampton in general; (recommended also, to the notice of all, who, in any place, have read his Pleas.) Price 2d.

The Insane World.

Sermon on the death of Dr. Simpson. By the Rev. J. F. Witteridge, of Walsal.

Sermon on the death of Dr. Simpson. By the Rev. G. Betts.

Sermon by Mark Wilks, on Nonconformity.

Sermon on Dr. Simpson's death, with a Sketch of his Life and Character. By G. Redford.

Just Published, An Investigation of the Cause of Easter, 1818, being appointed on a Wrong Day, plainly showing, that, unless the present system of Computation shall be abolished, greater errors must ensue; containing also, proposals for a Universal Calendar. By a Member of the University of Oxford. Price 1s.

Family Union; a Sermon delivered at the Sabbath Evening Lecture, Union Street, Southwark, January 4th, 1818. By James Churchill.

Also, The Message, a Tract, adapted to the New Year. By the same author.

Truth Vindicated, or, a Series of Remarks on some of the Leading Doctrines of the Gospel, with a particular view to its right administration; occasioned by Dr. Hawker's Appendix to his True Gospel. By J. Bidlake.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Communications have been this month received from Messrs. Robertson.—Jefferson.—Golding.—Liddon.—Trowbridge.—Cobbin.—Cooke.—Shrubsole.—Cloutt.—Grocer.—Williams.—Lacey.—Bulmer.—Innes.—Harris.—Morell.—Cope.—Bruce.—Bidlake.—Churchill.

Also from Cultor Veritatis.—Satira.—T. F.—Ex Presbyter.—L. W. O.—L. L.—R. U. V.—Moravian Missions.—Lover of Truth and Consistency.

It is hoped that the friends who have been engaged in preparing the Statistics for Berks, will not be hurt at its postponement till the next month, in consequence of the impropriety of dividing the Missionary Stations. If in the meanwhile, further interesting particulars of that county should come to hand, the Editors will feel obliged on their being forwarded to the Publisher's.

The Committee beg to observe, in reply to several friends from the country, who have kindly engaged to become Share-holders of this work, that the amount of their shares may be forwarded by a Post Office Order, for the Treasurer, Joshua Wilson, Esq. at the Publisher's.

Tilling and Hughes, Printers, Chelsea.